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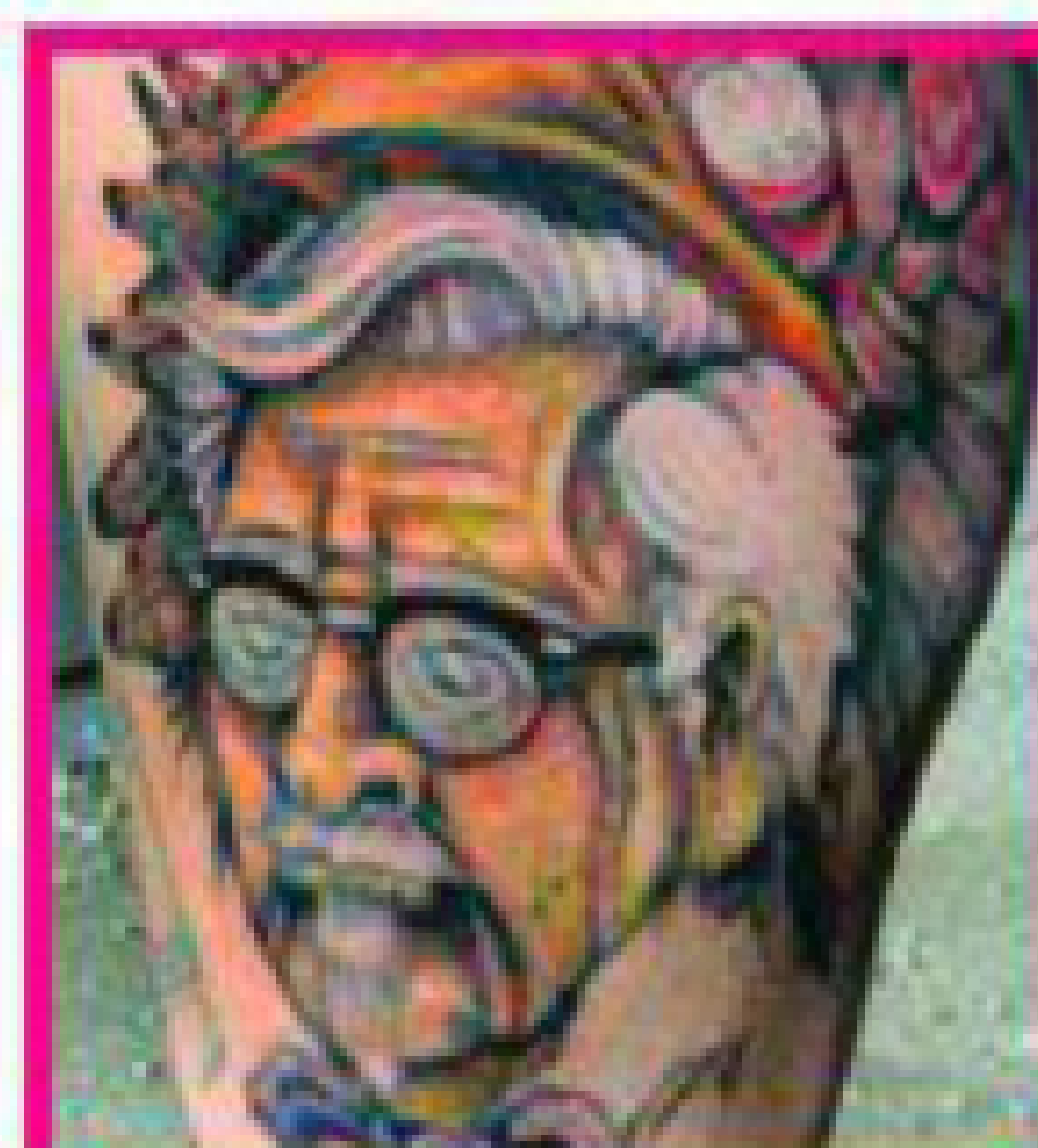
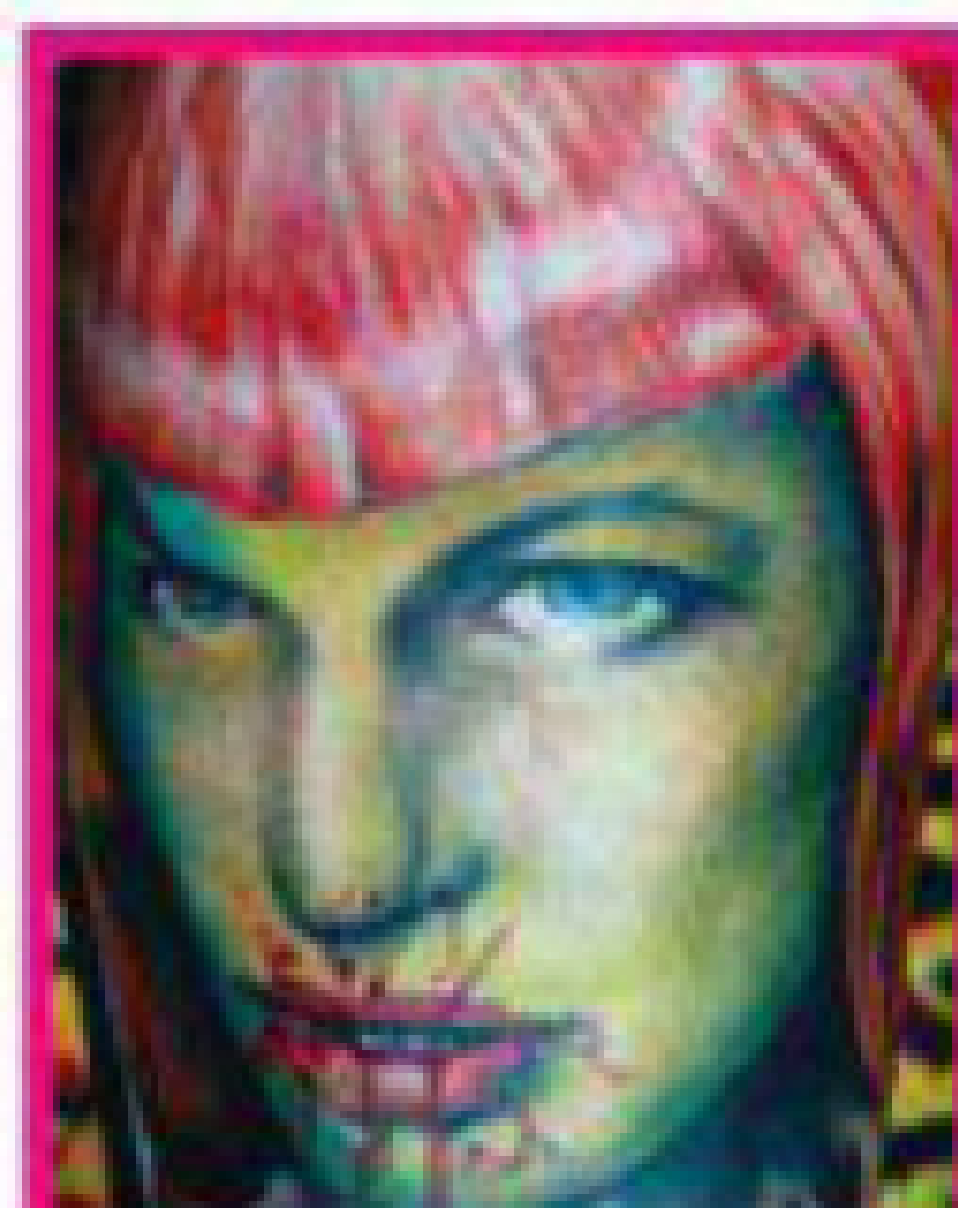
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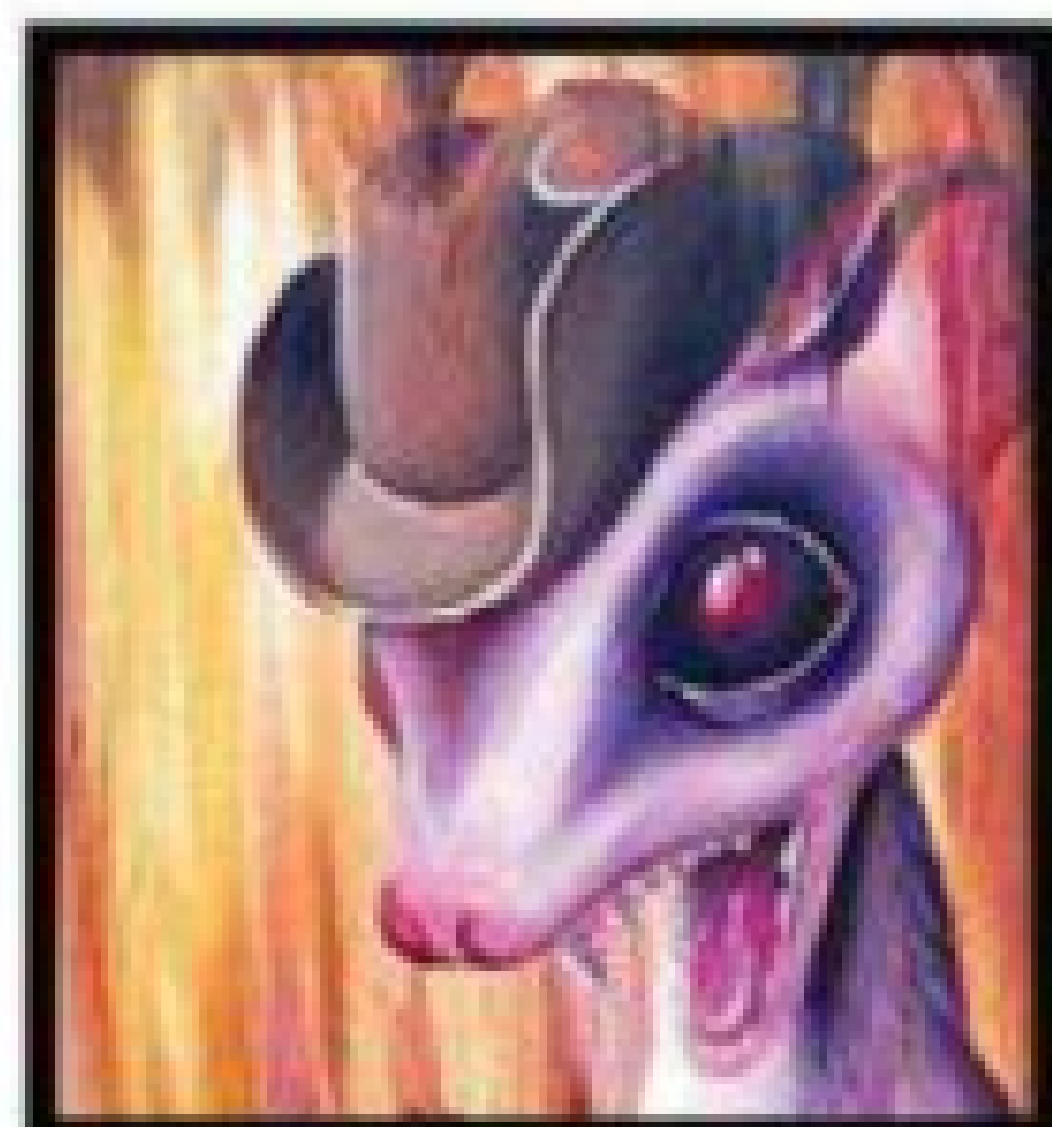
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editorial

SPATIAL RELATIONS

In the news around tax time there was a big splash over a fella in LA who had bought a storage locker contents at auction and found a very valuable comic book inside: the most valuable comic in the world, in fact. It was a mint issue of “Action Comics #1”, which was the very first airing of a hero named Superman. A recent auction sale of one of the other few mint copies (there are estimated to be less than a hundred in the world) had netted about a million and a half.

It was even bigger news because the comic had been stolen from actor Nick Cage during a burglary some years before.

There are or were several “reality” TV shows about the rich scores awaiting buyers of storage lockers. Various folks were shown making really top finds in various lockers and turning small dollars into much larger bucks. The theory is, you buy abandoned locker contents blindly and cheaply—you can look inside but not root around before the sale. After the sale you open up the boxes and sell the valuables within—stuff like rare Fender guitars, a car, many guns, juke boxes, and so on. Nobody on the reality shows had come anywhere near a Superman number one, however, mint or otherwise.

I did this locker thing years ago; I bought blind contents at auctions.

I’m sad to say I never made much of a score. For me, the people abandoned the lockers because there was just junk inside. I have also, at one time or another, stuffed those little cubes with many thousands of dollars in tools and guitars and whatnot. Years ago, when living alone, I used to rent one so that when I traveled I could put my valuables in it on the theory that my house was much more vulnerable to burglars than an anonymous locker. The new guy in a small town gets the hairy eyeball from all the neighbors, and his comings and goings are noticed. His (my) long-term absence was a matter of wide knowledge.

I have recently heard a couple guys musing on the dream of finding a storage locker full of old tattoo items, and how cool that would be.

I’m here to tell you it already happened once. It was in the city of Detroit, 17 years ago. An old-time tattooer named Mel The Head—nicknamed for the eyeball tattoo on his bald scalp, which was a rare thing then—had gotten sick and put all his stuff in storage. The locker went into default and he lost everything: not only a lifetime of tattoo equipment, flash, signage and supplies, he also lost

a professional shop’s worth of lapidary equipment and gemstones. He had taken to working with stones in his later life. Everything was gone. Mel even lost, he used to lament, all his photos. He didn’t even have a picture of his mother anymore. That was pretty heartbreaking to hear.

Mel had depended on some shirttail relatives to pay the bills while he was laid up and they had screwed up. I’m sure he never knew the contract was going sour. Mel had a lot of friends. He could have called around and gotten someone to cover him if he’d known.

This is a side of those get-rich-instantly TV locker stories you never hear, where someone is left without


even a picture of Mom. In the state where I reside, when you buy a locker like that, you are supposed to turn over all personal photos and letters, legal papers and so on to the storage company so they can, if possible, return it to the owners.

Mel has gone to that big studio in the sky, but he was a major Detroit figure in his day. Hearing the mom-picture horror story was not my first encounter with Mel.

In 1977, I was a customer at a studio in the Royal Oak area on a lucky night and managed to fall in with a small but dedicated tattoo group on a journey that truly had horns on its head. The shop owner, whose name I have forgotten, joined Mel the Head

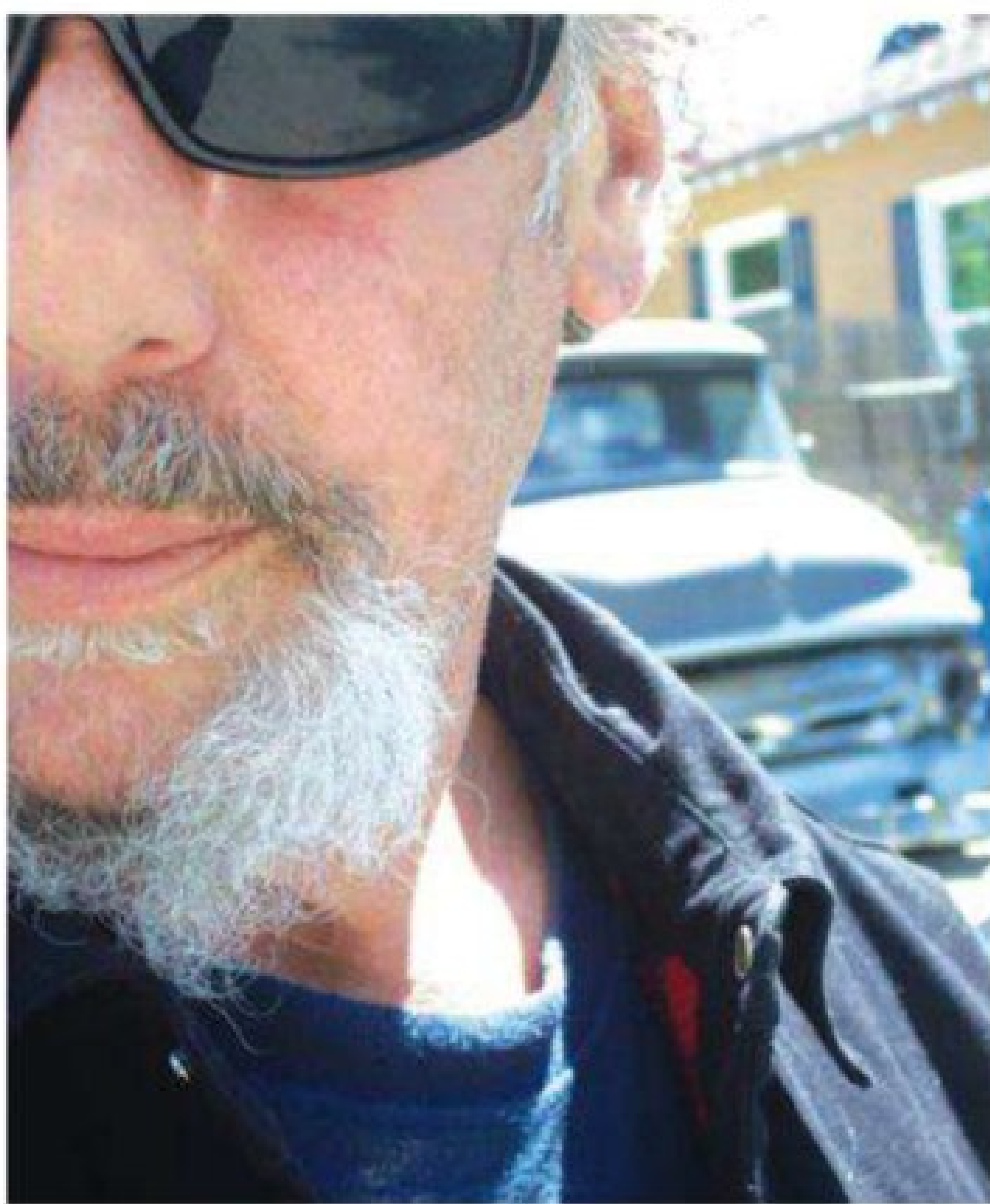
to honor a special visitor to Detroit, big Dave Yurkew, who was president of the National. The idea was to get Yurkew hammered, or at least that’s how I remember it. To that end, we repaired to a really monstro badass bar called the Last Chance, located at 8 Mile and Woodward. To the best of my recollection, Mel did not drink alcohol. He was there to socialize.

The Last Chance is gone, but its reputation as possibly the toughest bar in a very tough city lives on. I was in Detroit on business myself and went to the Last Chance every night I was in town after that. Never a dull moment, and I mean it. Twenty-whatever years before Toby Keith, I loved that bar from first sight.

Today, when I watch those TV locker shows, I sometimes think back on Mel. I wish, as much as I wish he’d been able to keep his stuff, that I’d been able to see his collection in one place. And I’m sorry it was reduced to a score. Nobody wants their life’s tools reduced to a score. 

—Chris Pfouts
Editor

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—Kasimir Malevich

CALLING ALL ANGELS

I read your editorial about your lost cell phone and the problems you had getting it back into service. I loved it. Big companies are all like that, except some are worse. Seems like it would be hard for a bunch of people to make a process that's basically simple so difficult, but it happens all the time. I know. I see it every day.

--James the Cable Guy
Fortville, IN

THE PRODUCT OF A BORED AND IDLE SOCIETY

The emergence of the “Tattoo Industry” is undoubtedly one of the most non-productive industries we have ever seen. Many people see tattoos as ugly and dirty, doing nothing whatsoever for the people who wear them in other people's eyes and certainly the product of a bored and idle society. The grave risks of infection in tattooing are rarely mentioned by the industry, relying on strict waivers and indemnity clauses to shield those who know the risk is serious if they neglect sterility or hygiene issues by the slightest degree. Tattooists themselves are now disposed to wearing surgical gloves because they themselves are at risk from people who remain silent about their HIV status or

other infection problem. It is clear that some shops are not playing by the rules and are way below health codes, which puts their clients at serious risk. Many so-called shops are nothing but pigsties that cut costs by taking shortcuts. The tattooing industry is an industry that should be taken with great caution by those who want to wear the ink and may inadvertently be taking a big gamble with their health.

--Maurice Fitzgerald
Shanbally, County Cork. Irish Republic

I can't find any part of your letter that isn't either factually incorrect, I'm sure on purpose, or just plain wrongheaded. Let's see, at first you called it a non-productive industry. In fact, for many years in most of the Western world, tattooing was the fastest growing section of the economy. And if it were true that “many people” see tattoos as ugly and dirty, people would not be pouring money into it. You'd get a lot more respect from me if you'd just come out and said that you think they're ugly and dirty rather than hanging the opinion on a bunch of imaginary straw people. That's a politician's trick.

As for the health and disease transmission issues, yes, they exist. Same as they exist in medical situations. If you had ever watched a

tattooer at work, you'd see him or her change gloves several times over in the course of setting up and working. And while you make it sound like tattoo artists are just discovering gloves and other disease shields, in fact they've been an industry requirement for about 30 years. I don't know of any real shop that “cuts costs by taking shortcuts” with health issues. What's your idea of cutting costs? Gloves are a few bucks for a hundred—well under a nickel per. How much money do you think a shop can save by cutting glove consumption? In fact, tattoo studios deal with an aware and awake public. If they tried goosing around with the health of their customers, not to mention that of the artists, business would come to a grinding halt.

When you say “Many so-called shops are nothing but pigsties,” my response is, “Name two.”

--Chris Pfouts
Editor

SOME THINGS

Some things are worth fighting for.

--M. Carerra
Via e-mail

Amen to that.

IF I EVER GET OUT OF HERE

Kathmandu was the site of the first Nepal Tattoo Convention on 22nd April, 2011. The show attracted over 50 tattoo artists and numerous clients. The tattooed and would-be tattooed ranged from elderly tribal women from the Terai (the lowland bordering India) to teens, housewives and professionals—as well as the tourists from the international backpacker community. Most of the permanent Kathmandu tattoo parlors are centered in Thamel, which is backpacker central, but ironically, most of the clients coming in for tattoos are Nepalese, as the area has a cosmopolitan avant garde ambience. One common theme is a desire for imagery from the main religious influences of Nepal, both Hindu and Buddhist iconography. These range from the sacred “OM” and other mantras, to the elephant-headed god Ganesh, erotic coupling gods and goddesses such as Shiva and Parvati or horrific deities. Although many designs are similar, much of the colorful inkwork is original and can be considered as a new kind of folk art.

--Priti Thapa
Kathmandu, Nepal

THE WAY TO GET 'ER DONE

Hello, my name is Chris Crane. I've been tattooing professionally for about three years. I'm a Ringling School of Art & Design graduate and I'm very ahead of the curve as far as tattoo artists go in my area. I really want to get some of my tattoos into magazines and start getting more noticed by the industry. Could you let me know where I can send photos of my work?

--Chris Crane
Via e-mail

My name is Tiffany Feliciano. I was interested in mailing or e-mailing you some of my pictures, and perhaps you may be interested in putting me in your magazine. I have a total of 14 tattoos from my back, arm, sides and foot, I will be getting more work done this upcoming week and soon will be starting my chest.

--Tiffany Feliciano
Via e-mail

I read the information on submission of artist and I need the address where I can send the photos with artist name on back. If this is allowed via e-mail or another process please let me know.

--Govanda Davis
Via e-mail

I am a fan of your magazine and would like to be in it if possible. I just want to know how you want me to get photos to you and what information you may need? Thank you for your time.

--Jeremy Lifsey
jertat2@yahoo.com

Dear International Tattoo Art magazine: My name is Sándor Nyíri, I'm a Hungarian tattoo artist and the owner of the Locomotive Tattoo Studio in Budapest. I like and respect your magazine very much and would be honoured to have some of my work published in it. Would you mind to send me your e-mail address please, so I could send you some photos of my work. Thanks a lot, waiting for your reply.

--Sándor Nyíri
Via e-mail

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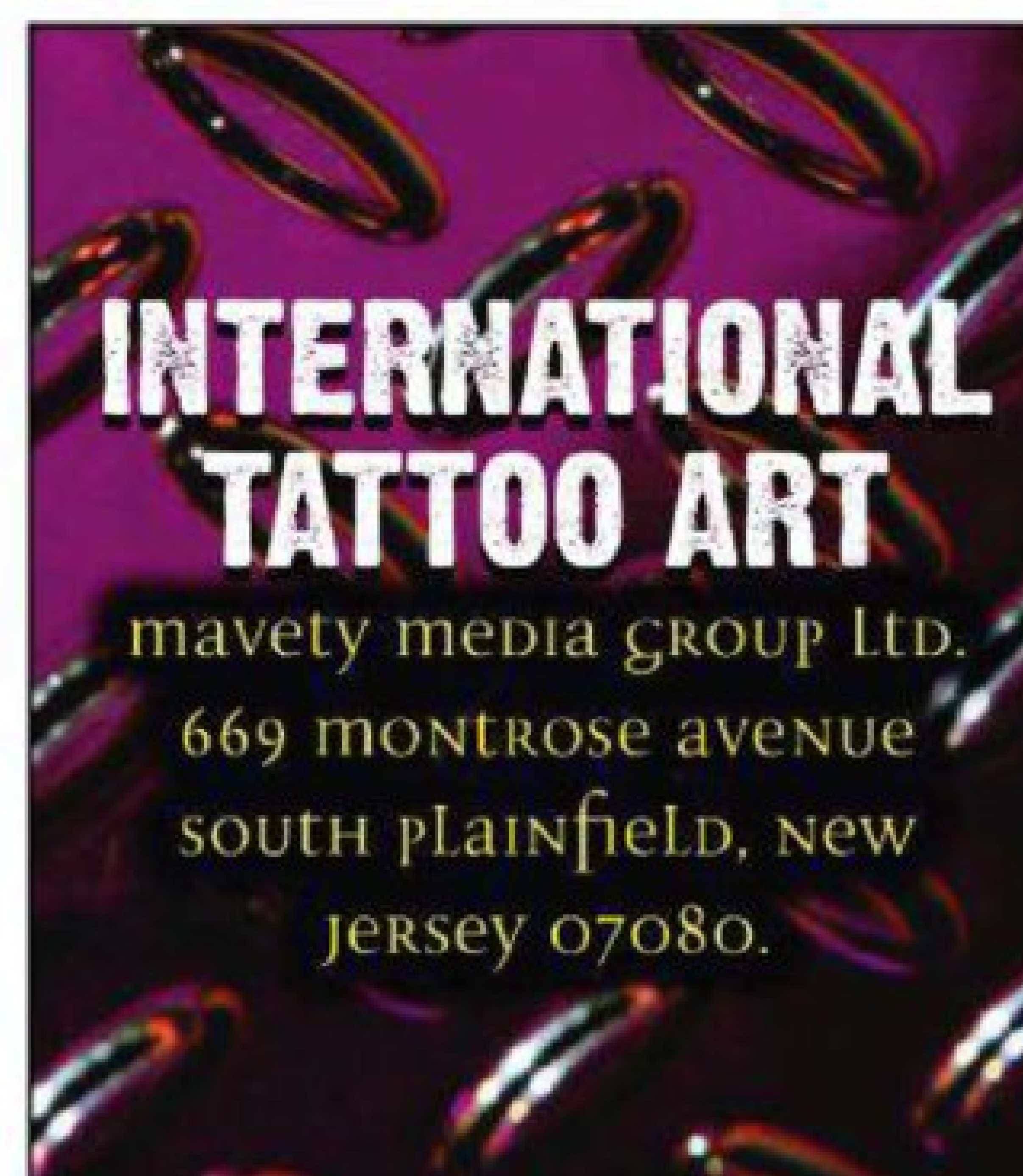
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There is no specific person to direct your submissions to—it all goes to the same place, which is the right place. Be sure that your name, shop name, and address are on the back of EACH PHOTO. A phone number is also helpful. Just throwing a piece of paper with the name on it into the envelope is not sufficient. If you need to be certain that the package arrived, use the U.S. Post Office's Delivery Confirmation system. They attach a green sticker to the item and you can check its status online. Or ship FedEx or UPS. Because of the volume of mail we receive we cannot answer questions about an individual package either by phone or online.

Finally—we ask that you send us exclusive photographs. If you're sending the work to other places at the same time, we'd rather not get it. Our lead time is long—we work as much as five months ahead of the cover date, so be patient.

Thank you for thinking of INTERNATIONAL TATTOO ART; we couldn't do it without you.





AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH TEXAS TATTOOIST JEREMY MILLER

By Amanda Stephan

THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF LIFE ARE FREQUENTLY PARALLELED TO THE PEAKS AND VALLEYS of mountainous landscapes. For Texas native Jeremy Miller, one of the highlights of his life thus far involved a peak in the most literal way. Miller climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro. Africa's highest mountain, Kilimanjaro's peak rises 19,341 feet above sea level—over three and a half miles into the sky.

Miller has also been a competitor in five marathons and has happily managed life as a husband and father. His wife, Abbey, and his 2-year-old daughter, Holland, are Miller's primary focus and happiest achievements. However, Miller is also proud of his success in two other facets of his life, his education and his tattoo career.

"As far as my tattoo career goes," he said, "I am most proud of the e-mails that I get from other tattoo artists saying that my work inspires them. It is so incredibly flattering when an artist tells me they find my work inspirational, and it feels so good to know that my peers and colleagues respect my work in that way. Out of everything, however, I am most proud of my degree. I worked very hard for a long time for my degree, and while my high school friends just went to college and had their parents foot the bill for everything, I had to work full-time in the Air Force and part-time at a tattoo shop while still going to class. Essentially I sacrificed over ninety hours a week for several years in order to finish my degree."

Miller wasn't always such an exceptional student. Once he graduated from high school in Houston, Texas, he moved to Austin and enrolled in college at St. Edwards University. After one semester he dropped out of school with a grade point average that fell somewhere around the unimpressive level of 1.0. He moved back to Houston and began pursuing a party lifestyle instead of a college degree. Fortunately, it didn't take long for Jeremy to realize that he was heading down a rocky path and was sure to stumble. "After about four months, I decided enough was enough and I joined the Air Force," Jeremy said. "During my six years in the Air Force, I actually managed to finish my undergraduate degree, and as my military career came to an end, I decided to move back to Austin to redeem myself. Now I am back in school at St. Edwards University, but this time as a graduate student with a much better grade point average."

Through it all, Miller had a powerful appreciation for art. "I have never had any formal art training, but I have been drawing for as long as I can remember," he said. "My grandma even has some of my artwork from second grade framed on her wall." Even when he's not tattooing, he is creating art in some form. "I do all of my sketches with red pencils," he said, "but



my full-color pieces are all done with Prismacolor pencils. I would really love to start working with oils in the future." Early on, his fascination with art included the tattoo arts. Jeremy recalls the many times in his boyhood that he would lay his head on his father's chest and admire the small broken heart that was tattooed there.

Eventually Miller decided to try his hand at tattooing. A friend of his was confident that Miller would have a knack for it and bought him a cheap Internet kit. Two weeks later, that friend was covered in some unsavory tribal. Fast-forward eight years and the art that Miller now tattoos on friends and clients is exceptional. Miller's artistic style has attracted clients from across the country, and he attends numerous conventions and works guest spots to bring his talents to new locales. His typical stops include Detroit, Philadelphia, Houston, Dallas, Austin, Hell City, and Miami. "I always work conventions with my good friend Matthew Clarke from Midnight Moon Tattoo in New Hampshire," he said.

When considering his own work, Miller prefers to approach his subjects from a positive perspective. "My artwork definitely has a theme and my goal is to always receive a good reaction when people see my work, be it tattoos or other mediums. I guess you could say my theme is simply lighthearted," he explained. "So many tattoos are about sad things in life. I certainly appreciate those tattoos and see where they have their place, but television has made it seem like that is all tattooing is about, so I try to do work that shows tattoos can be fun and lighthearted. People should realize that you can get tattooed just because it is a fun tattoo, so a lot of my work is based in humorous word play."

Interestingly enough, Miller's favorite style of tattooing and his favorite style to tattoo are two different things. He really enjoys tattooing new school-themed subject matter, but his

personal favorite in terms of style is illustrative realism.

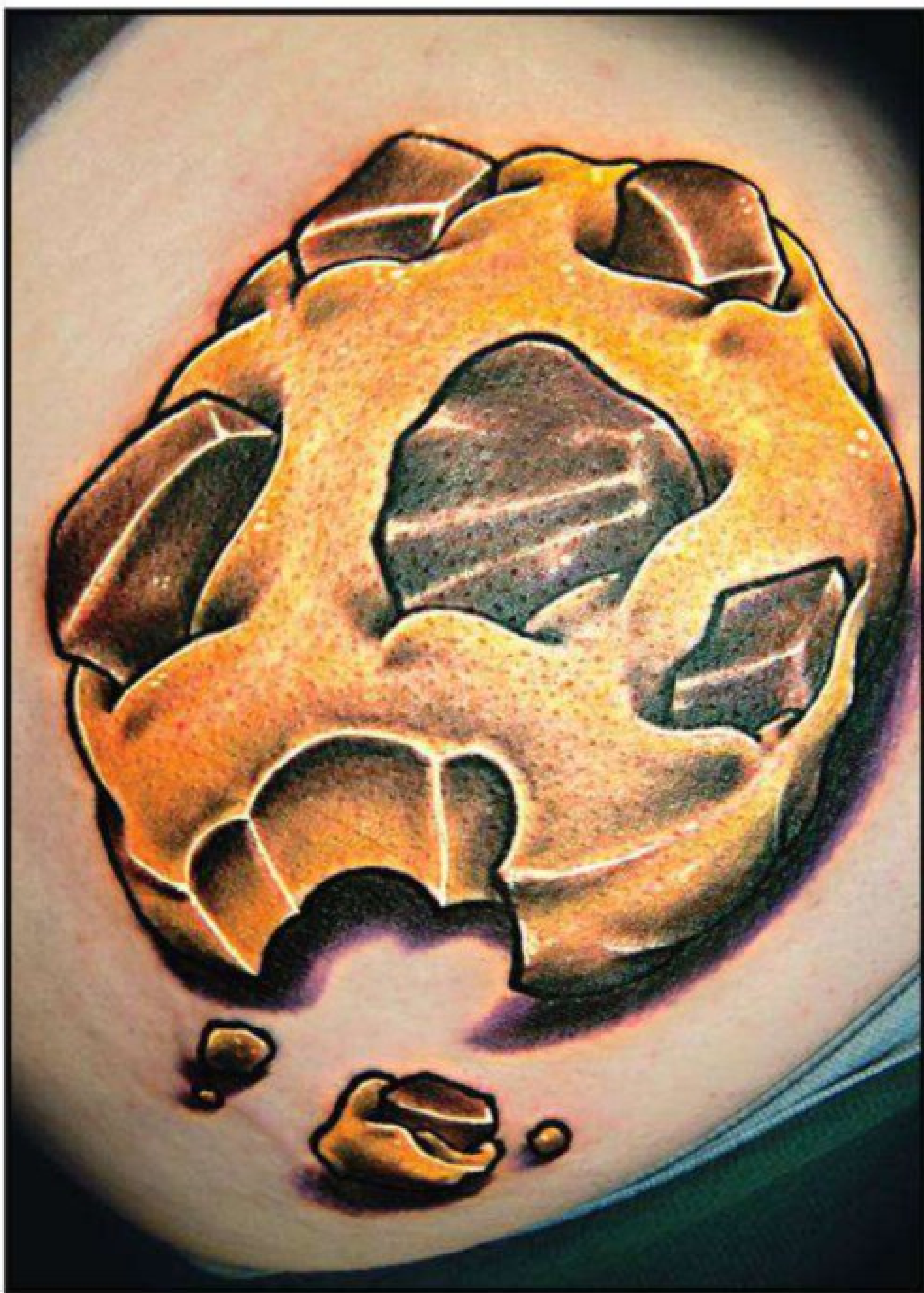
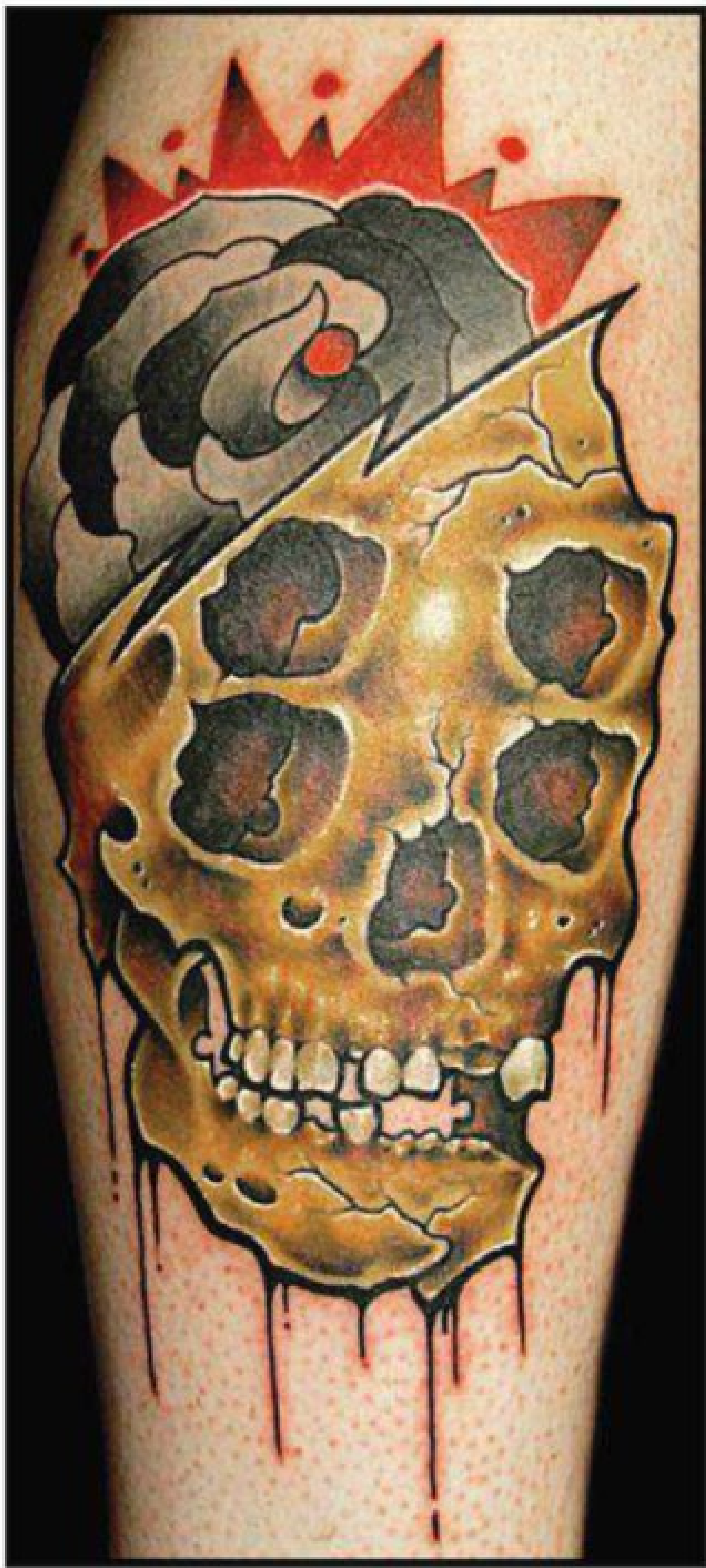
The artists who Miller admires, like Timmy B, Jeff Ensminger, and Josh Woods, are a clear indicator of his affection for the style. However, the artist who has really captured his attention as of late is Tomasz Torfinski, also known as Tofi. "I don't know exactly what it is about his work that I love, but it is seriously amazing," he said. If he were able to get tattooed by Tofi, Miller has a particular theme in mind. "I would get his interpretation of fighting for what seems like you will never accomplish, basically, the constant struggle for attainable goals that seem unattainable."

This theme clearly could be applied to Jeremy Miller's life over the last eight years. He has overcome adversity and uncertainty and has climbed to impressive heights as an artist, student, and family man. He is thankful for the help that he has had along the way, particularly the support of his family and his sponsors in the world of tattooing. "I have a lot of people that ask me for tips and tricks, but the fact of the matter is that we are all limited in our craft by the tools we use, so why not supply yourself with the best tools possible, so that you can create the best tattoos possible," he said.

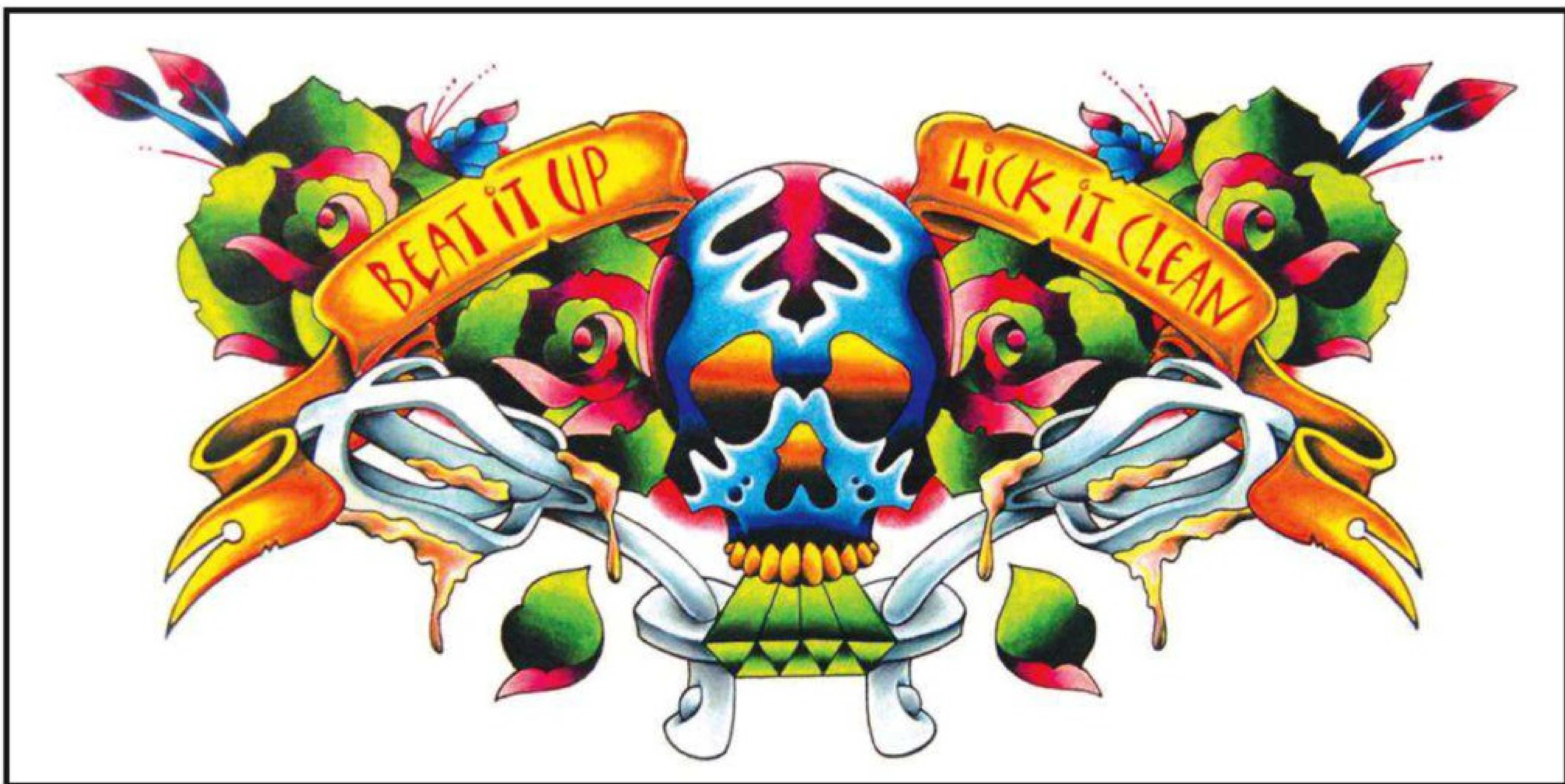
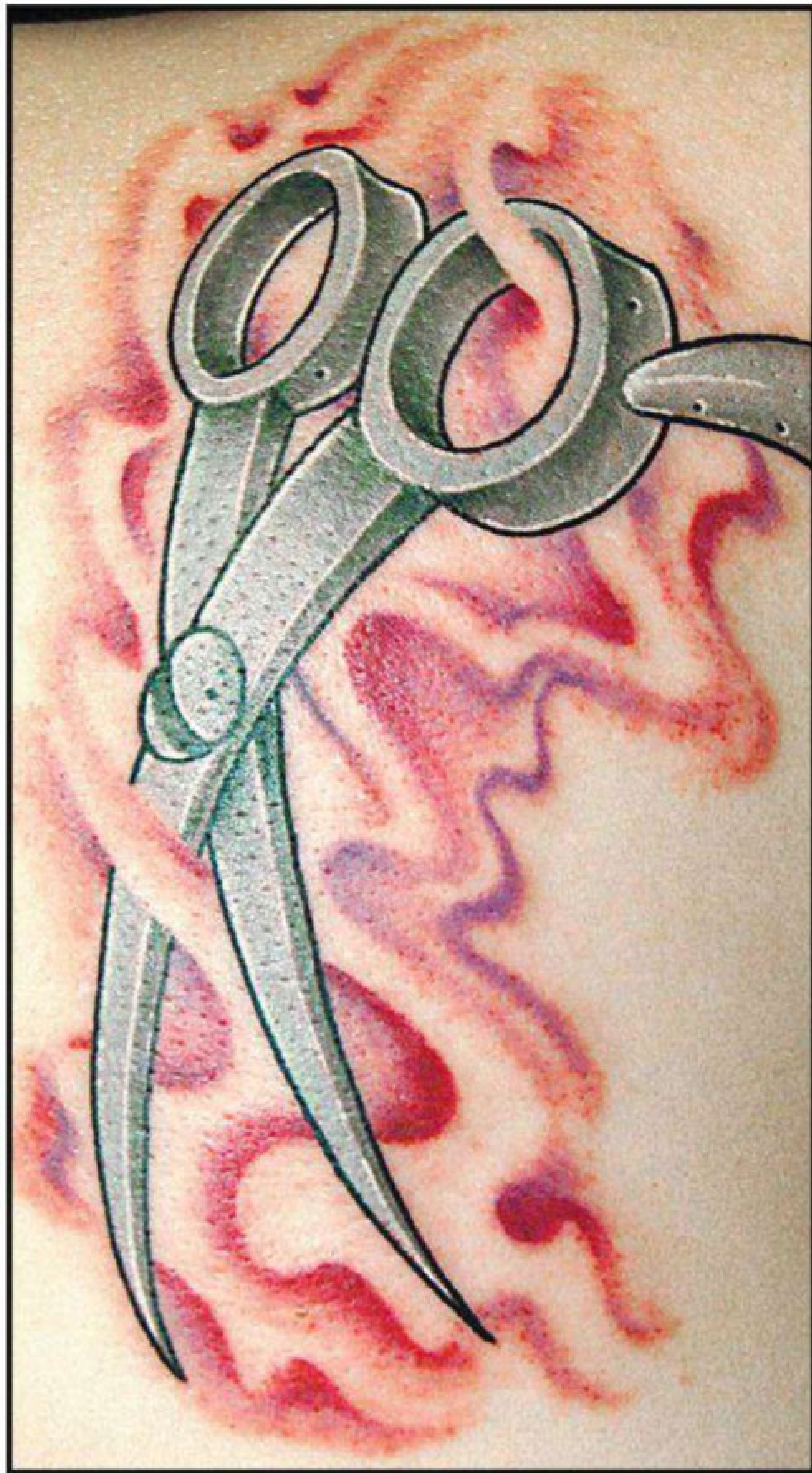
Miller hopes that his future presents him with the opportunity to create more of the best tattoos that are possible. "In ten years, I pray to God that I am finished with school," he said. "I fully plan on going on for a PhD after I finish my Master's this year, so I am really concerned that in ten years I might still be going to class every week. I do firmly believe, and my mom will disagree with me on this, that I will always be a tattoo artist. I can see myself moving on to other ventures, but I think tattooing will always be a part of my life, if even as a hobby."

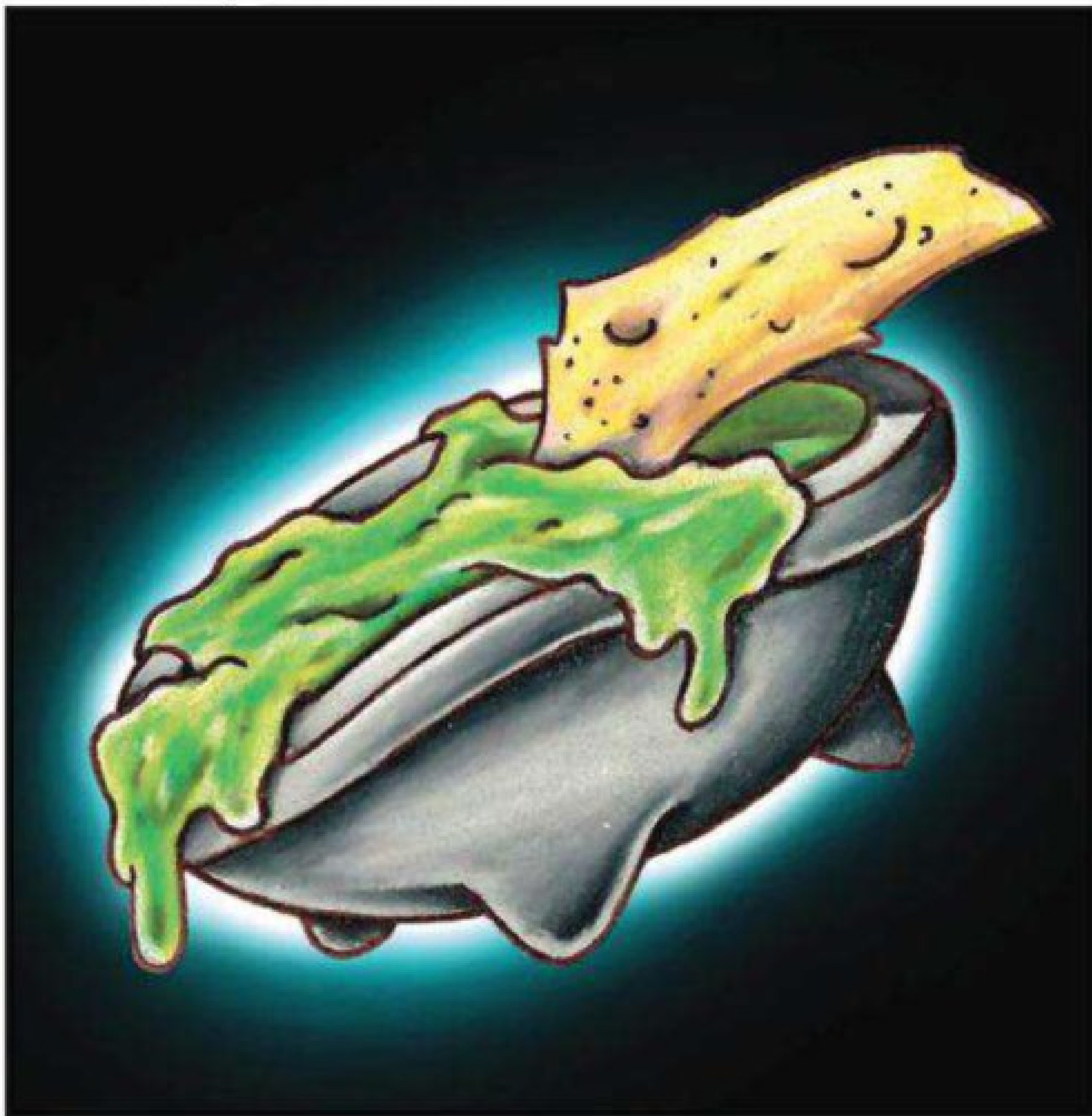
Jeremy Miller's home base is Pigment Dermagraphics and Fine Art in Austin, Texas. Look for him there or on the Web.

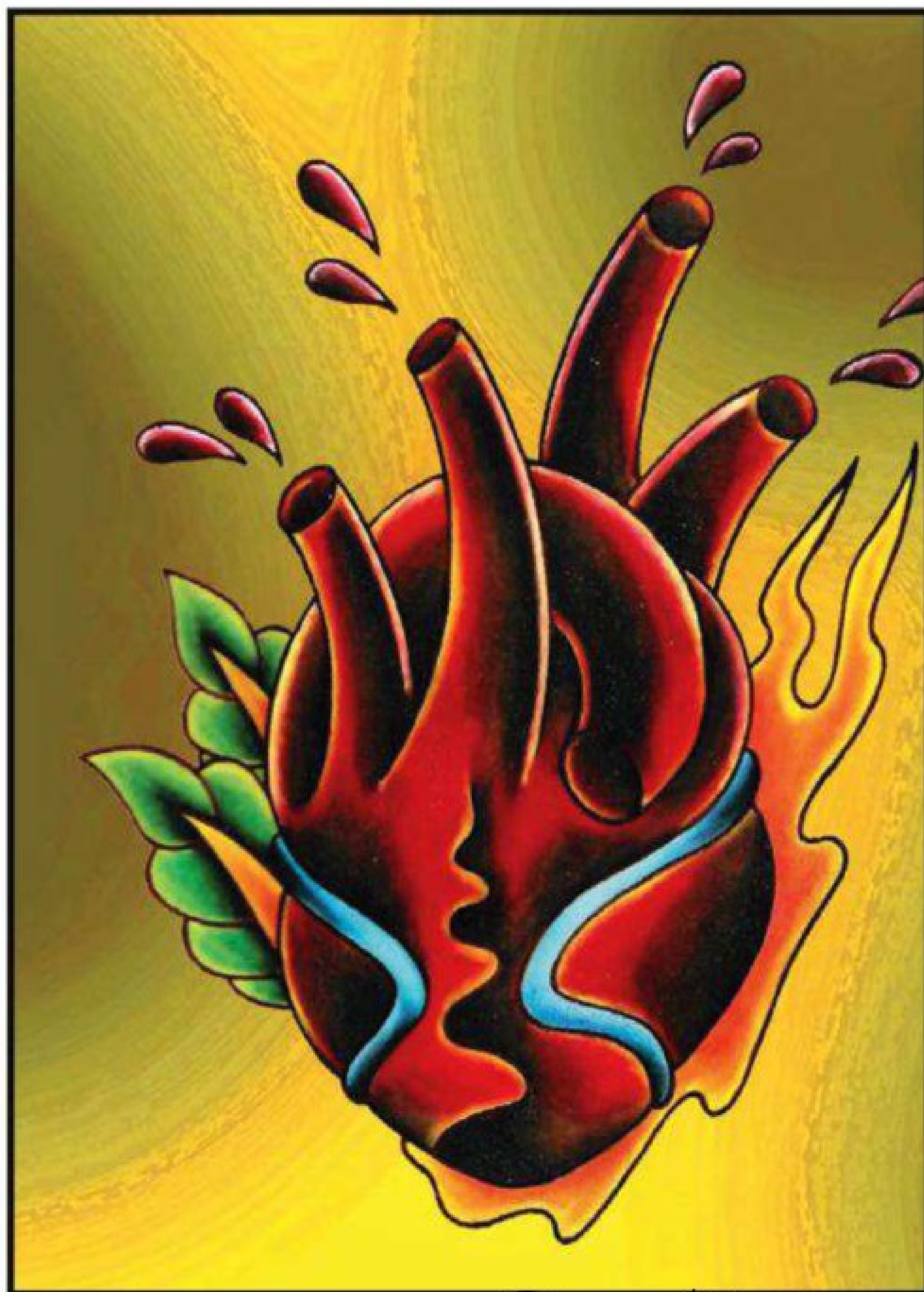
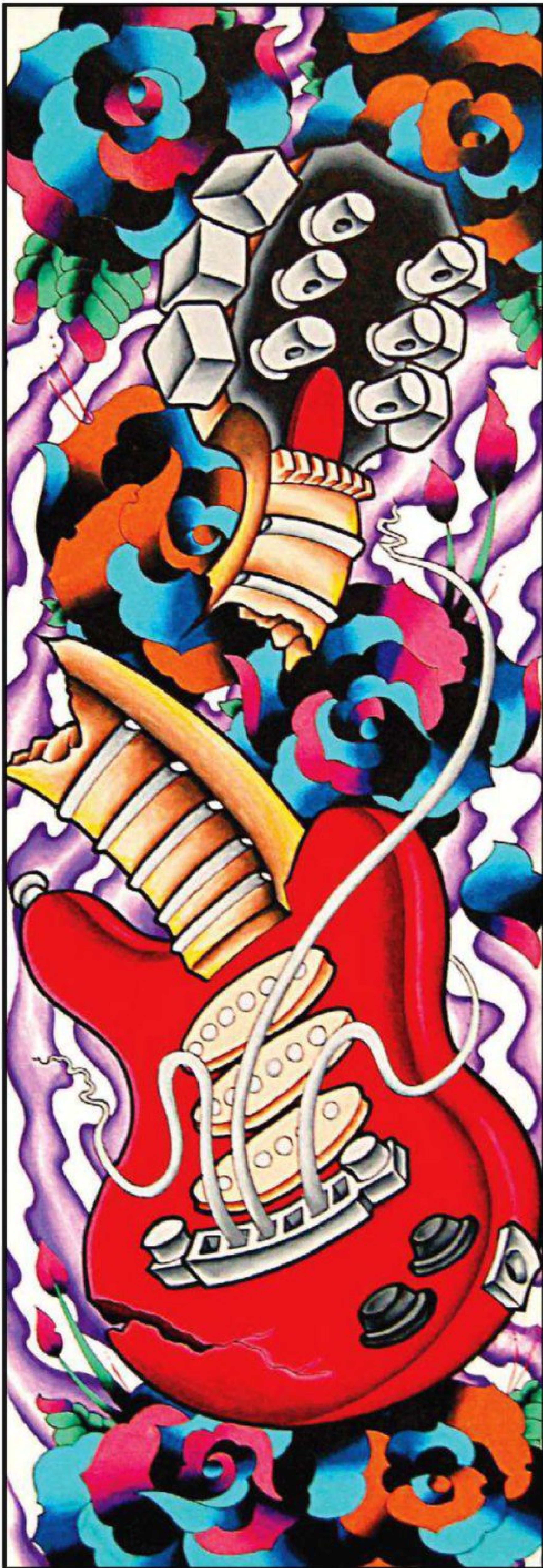
JEREMY MILLER



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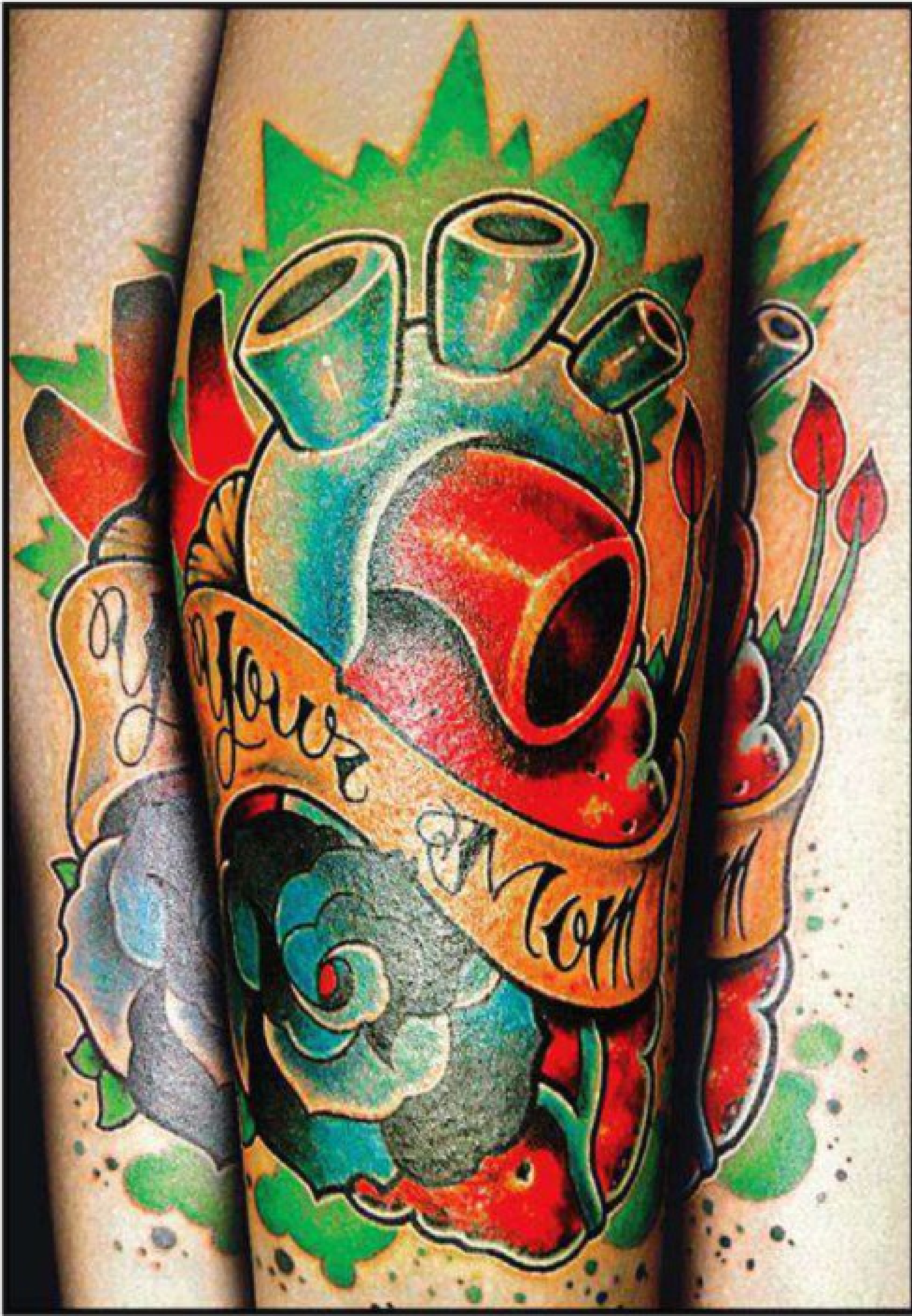




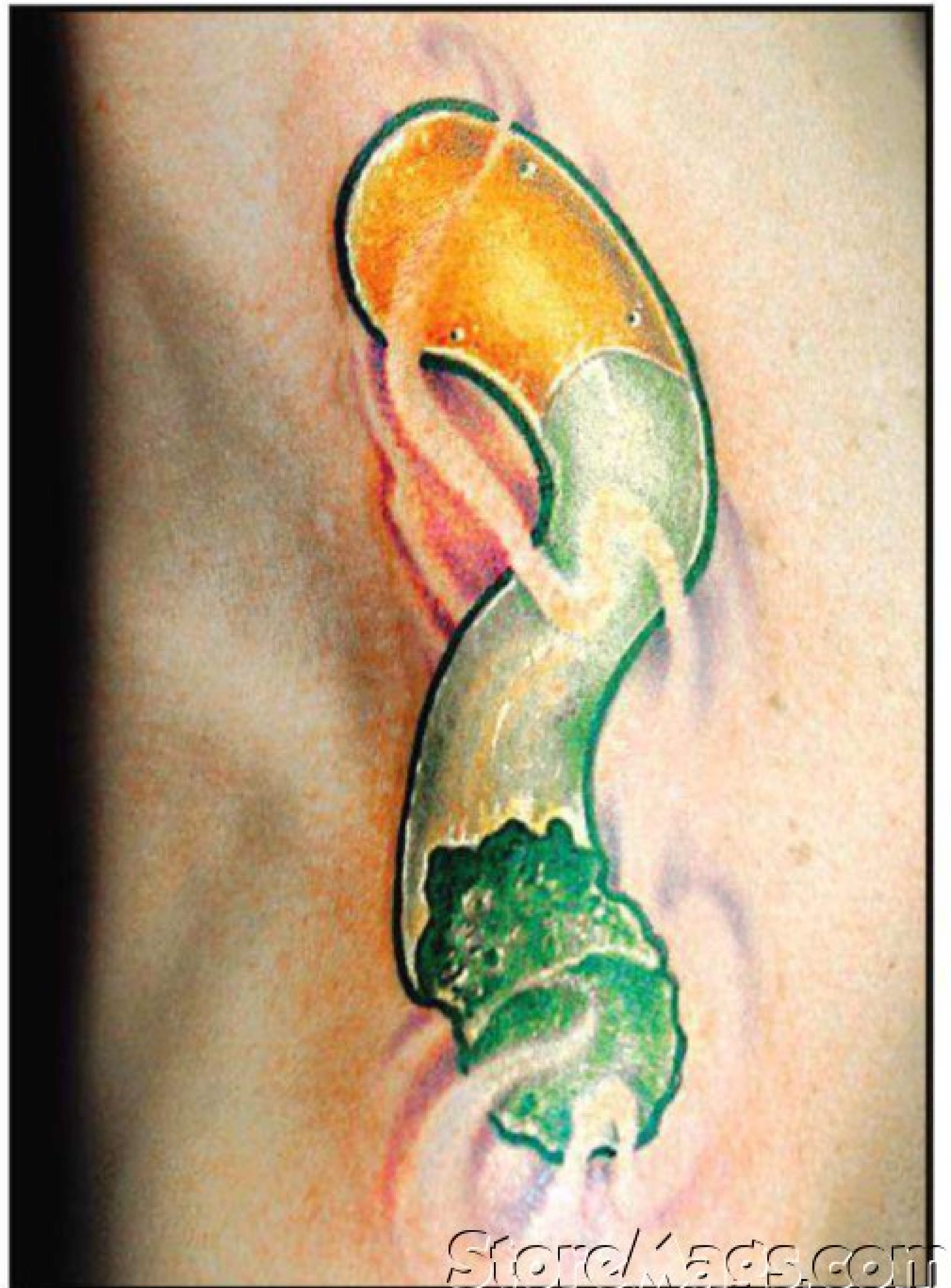


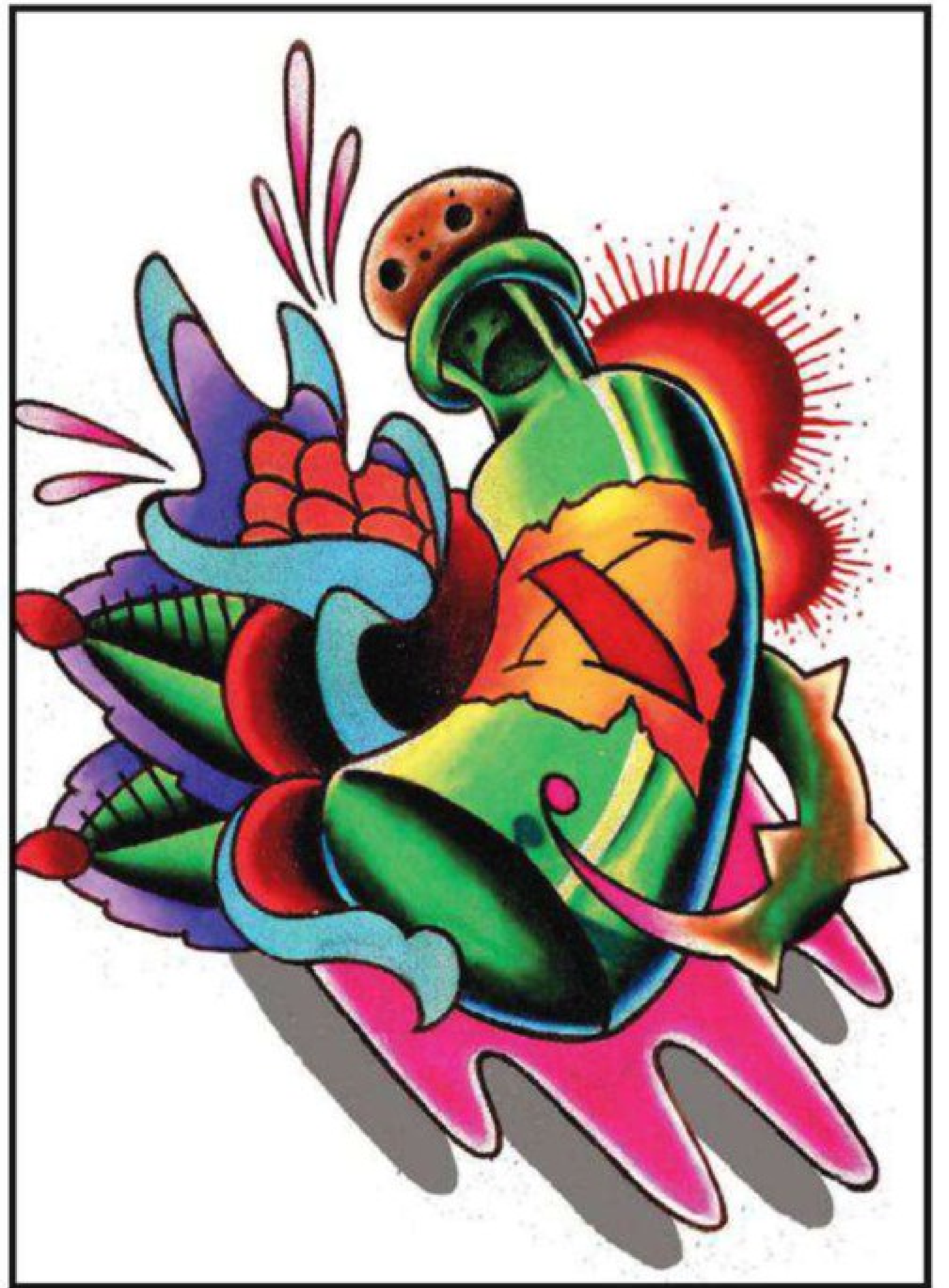
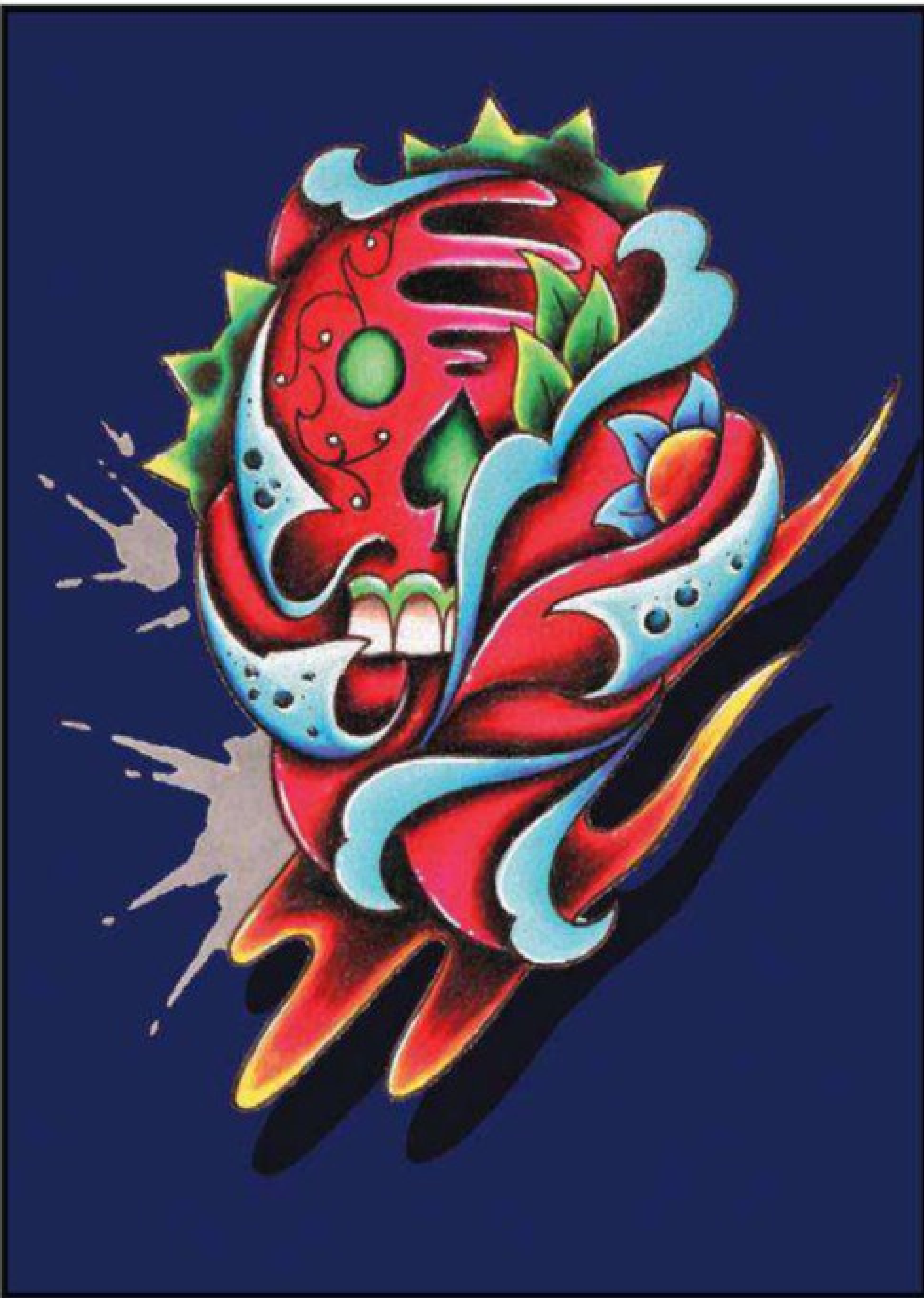
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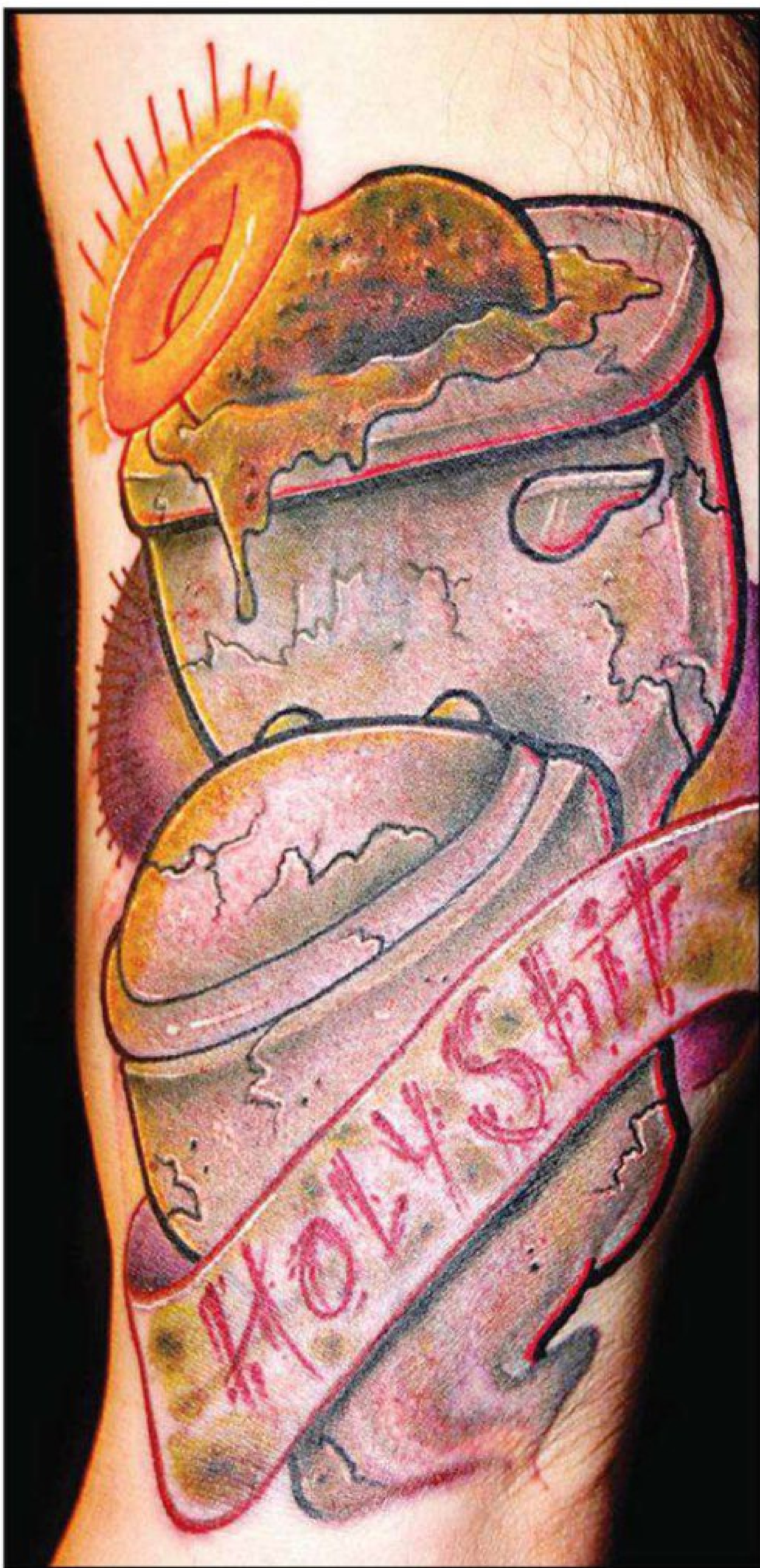


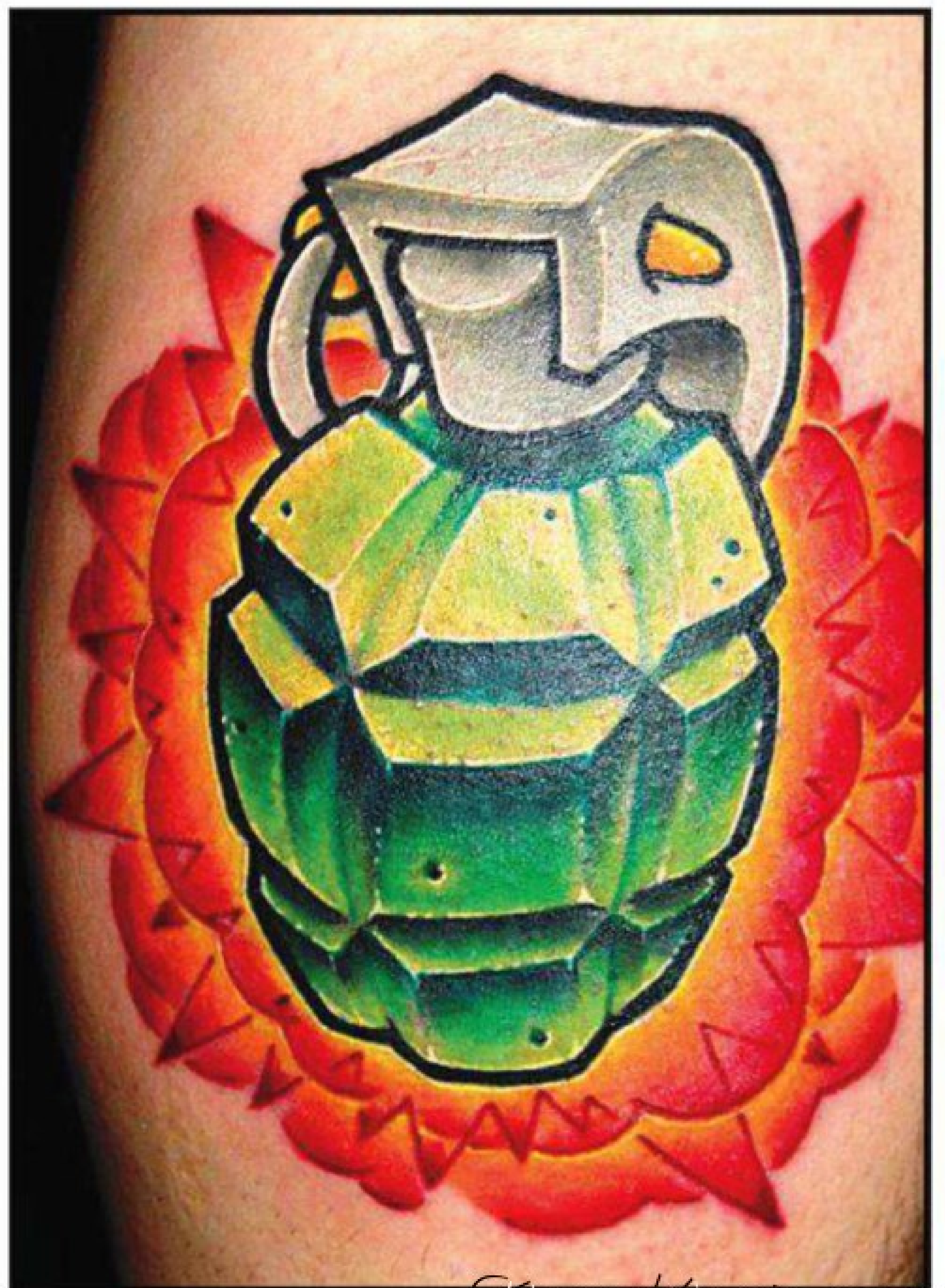
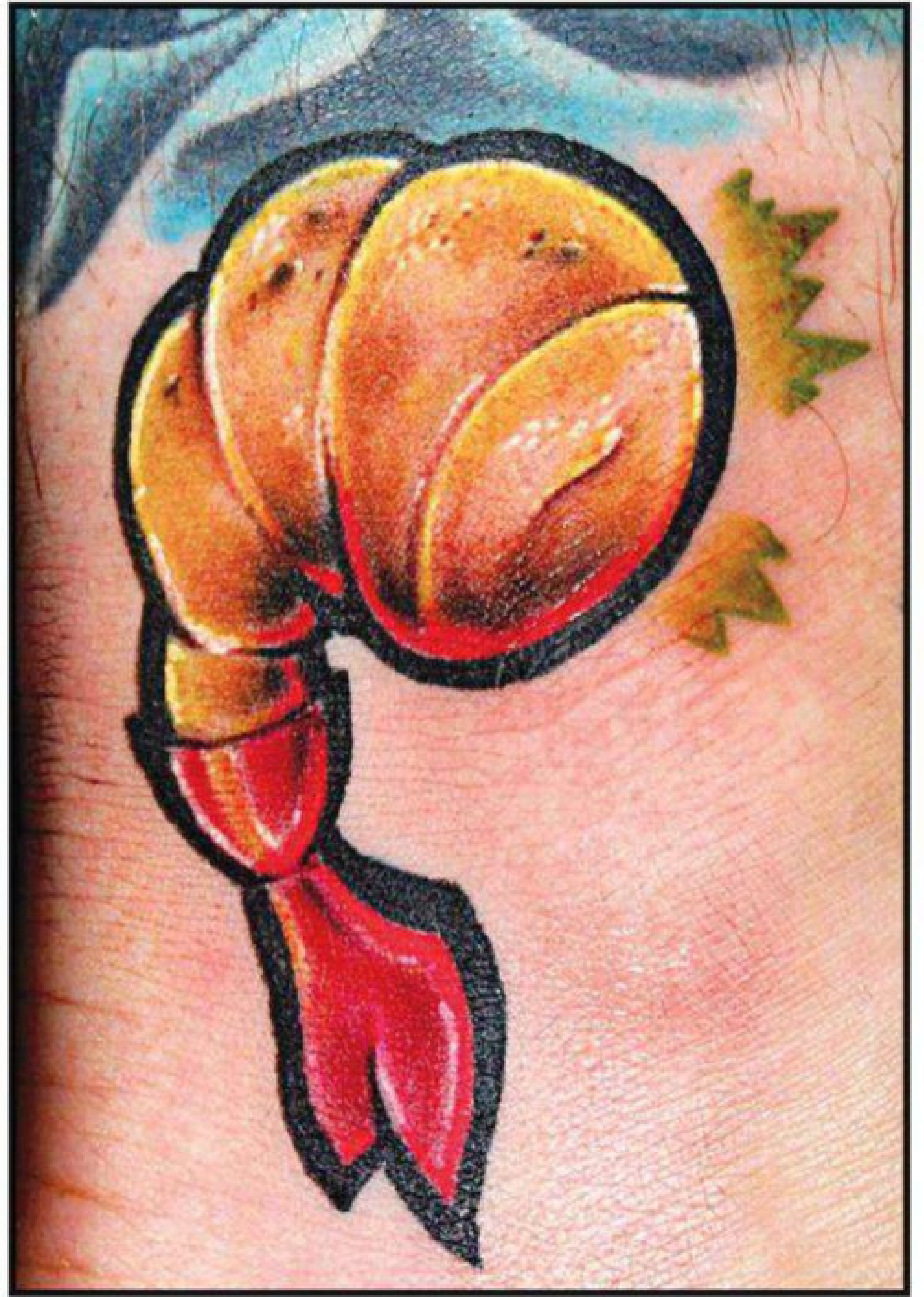
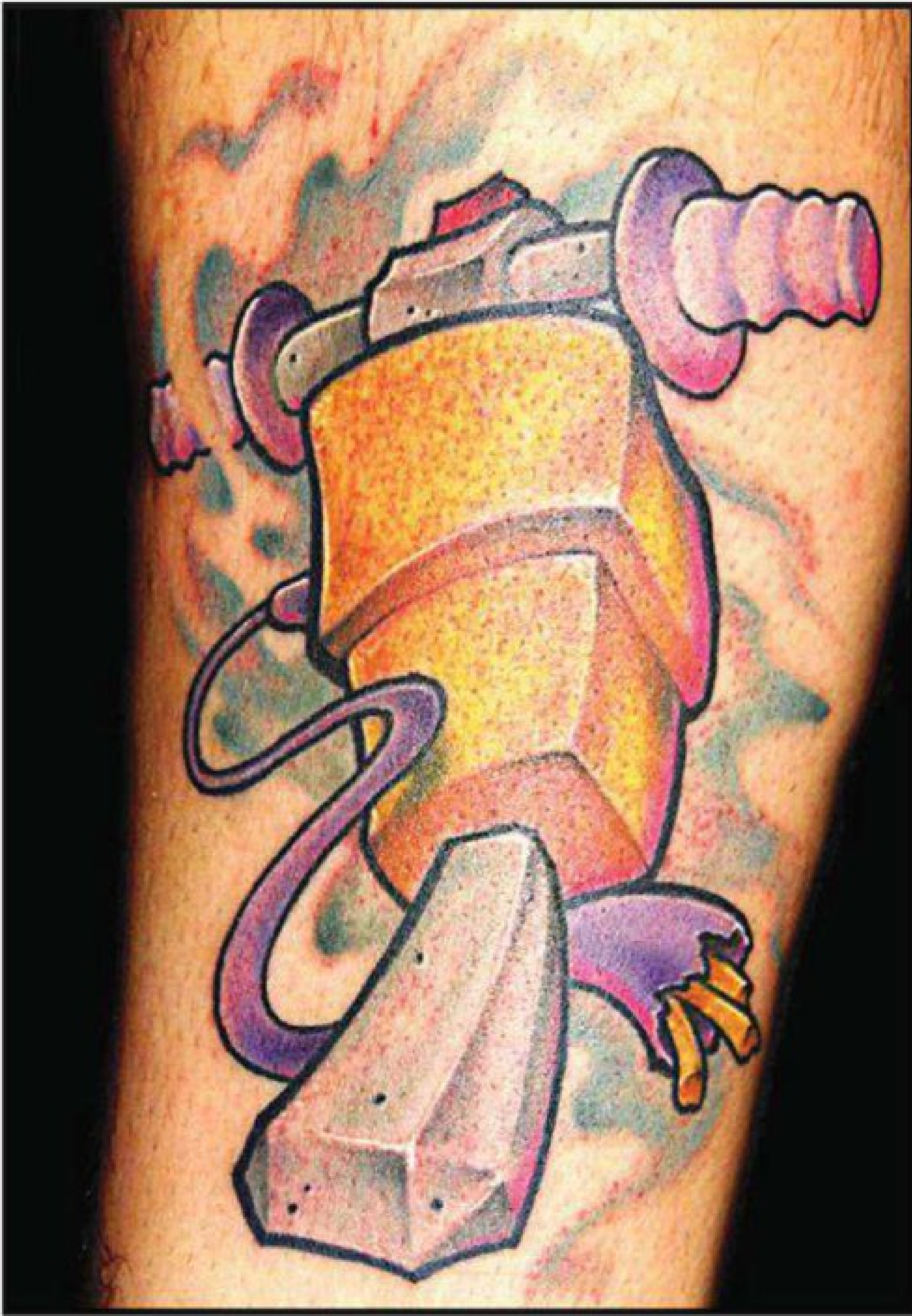


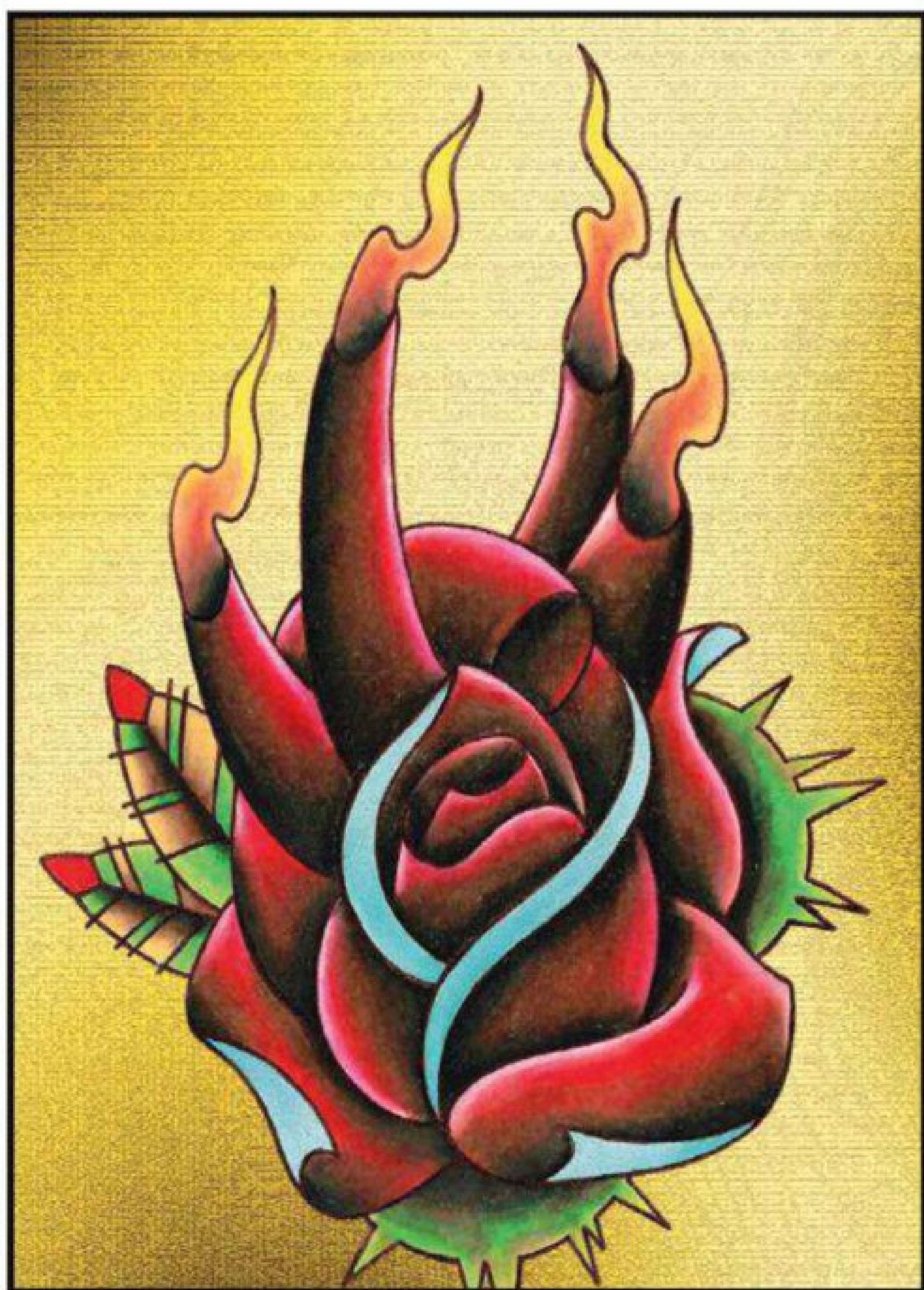
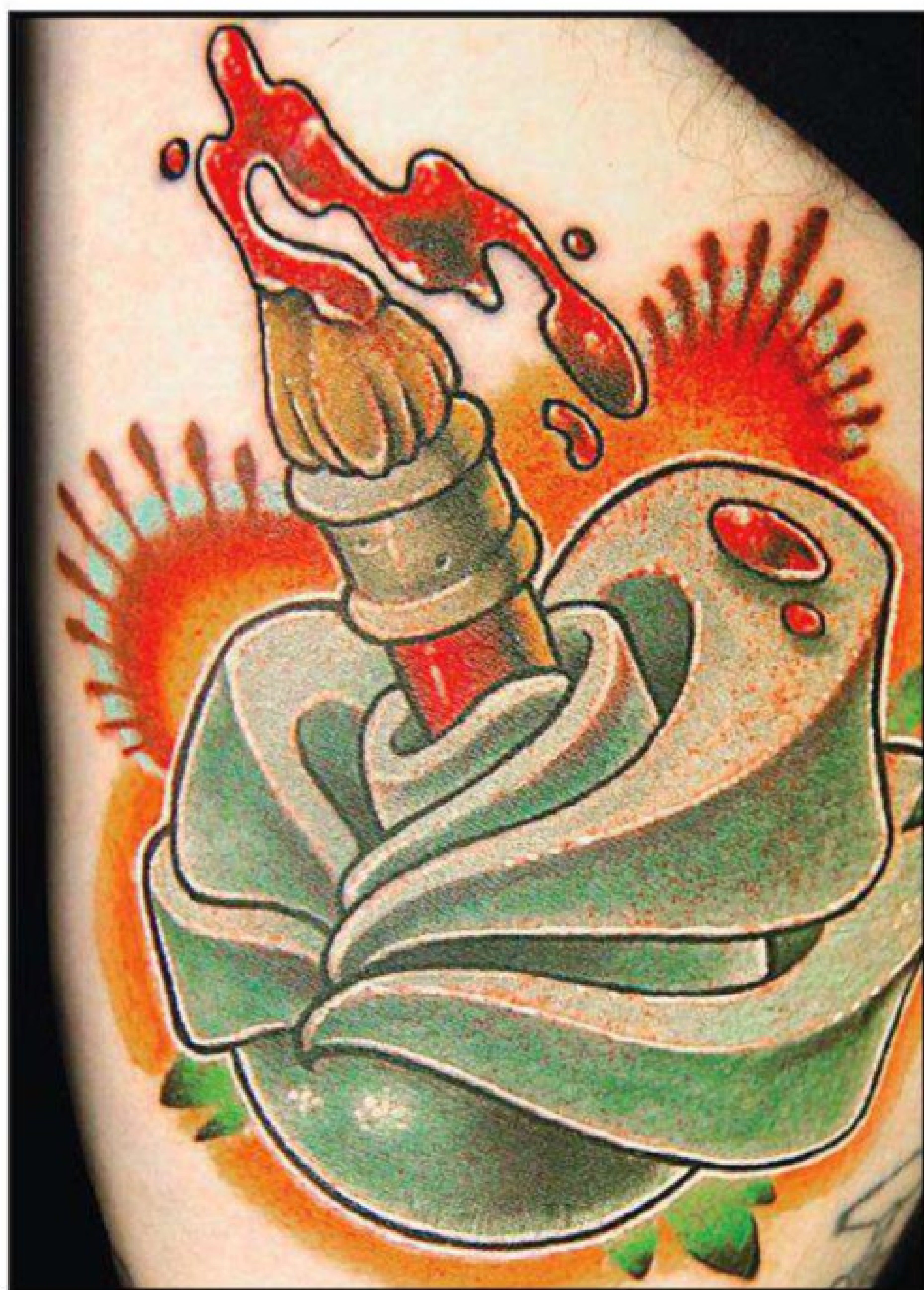
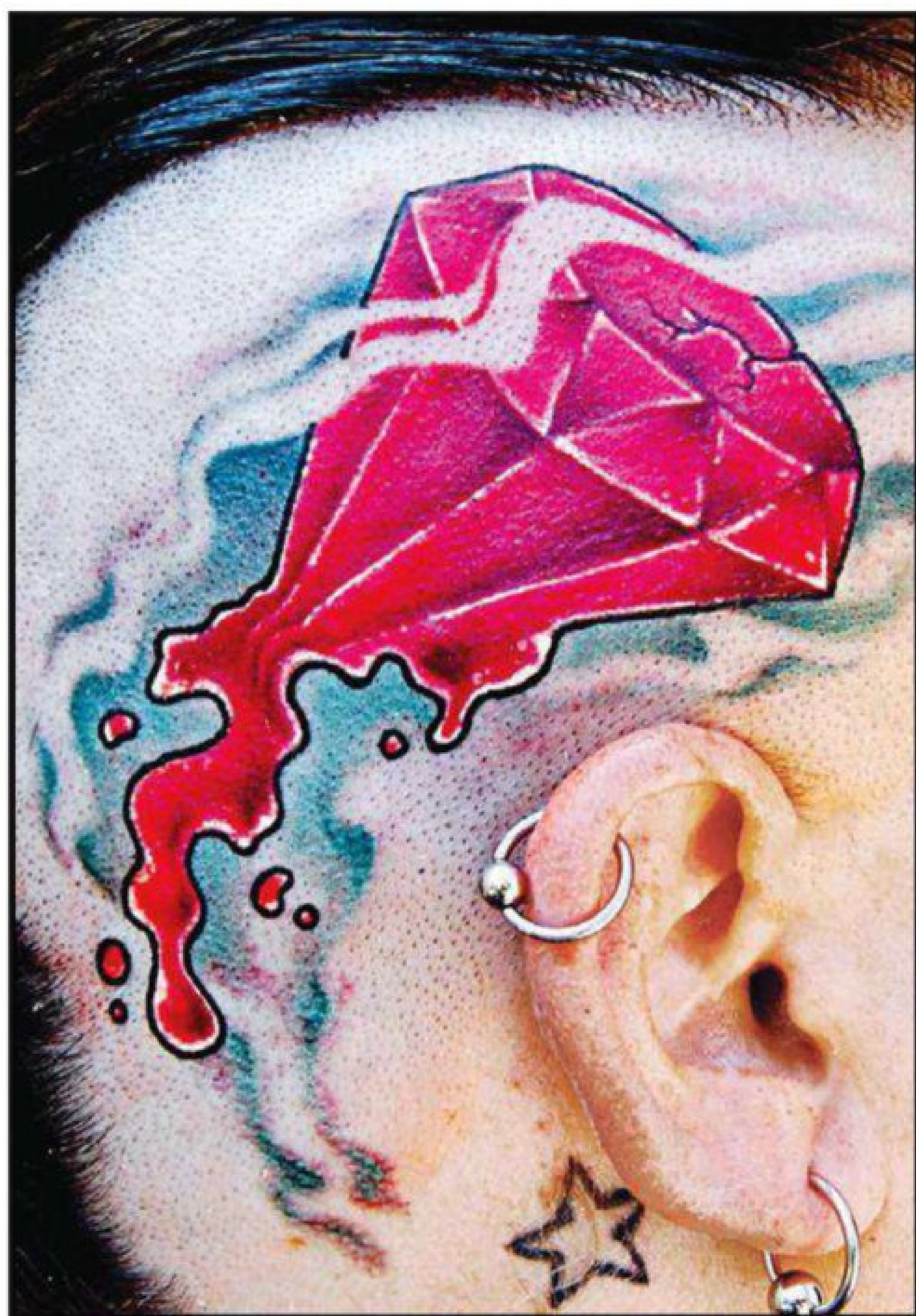
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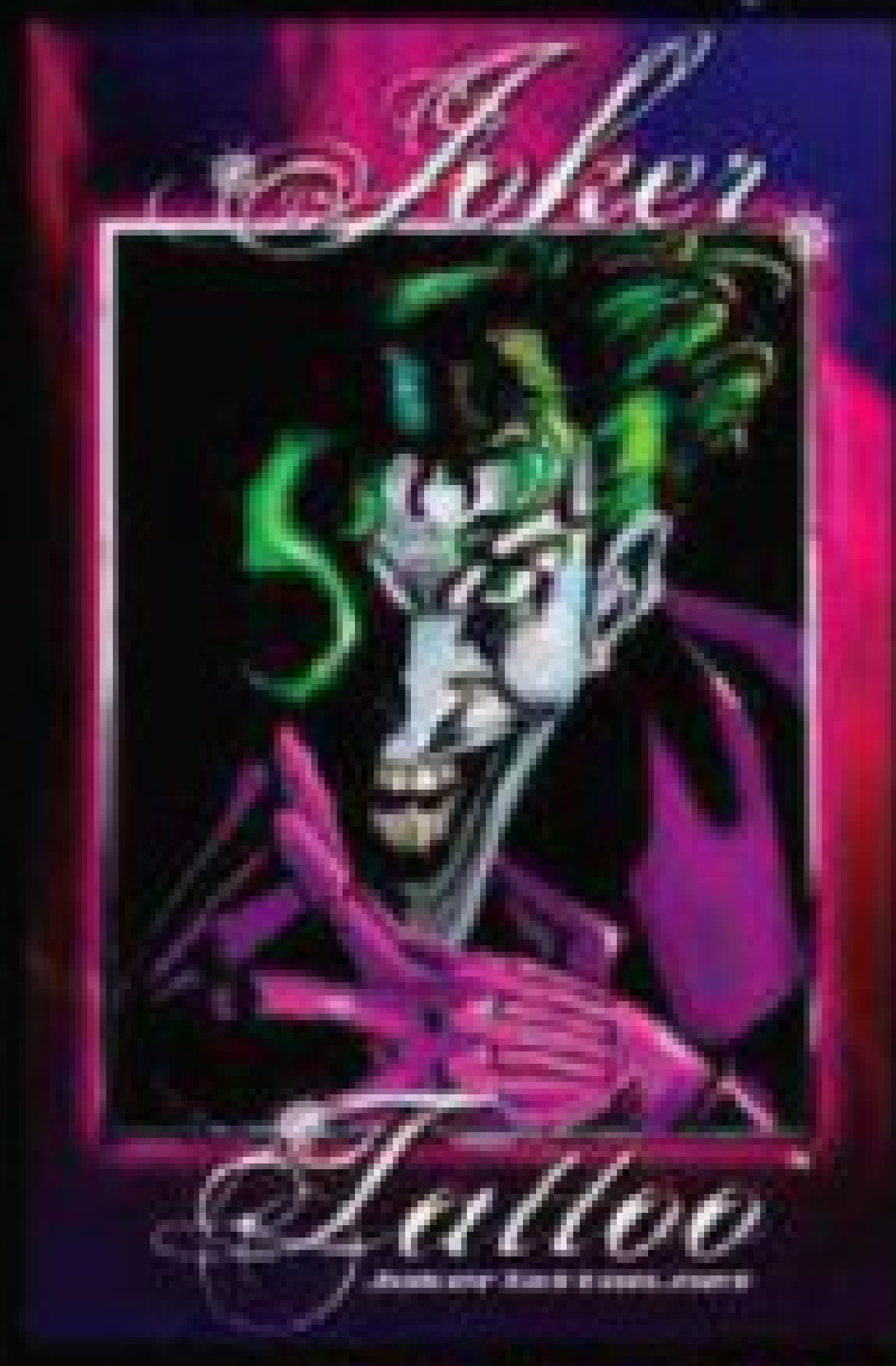




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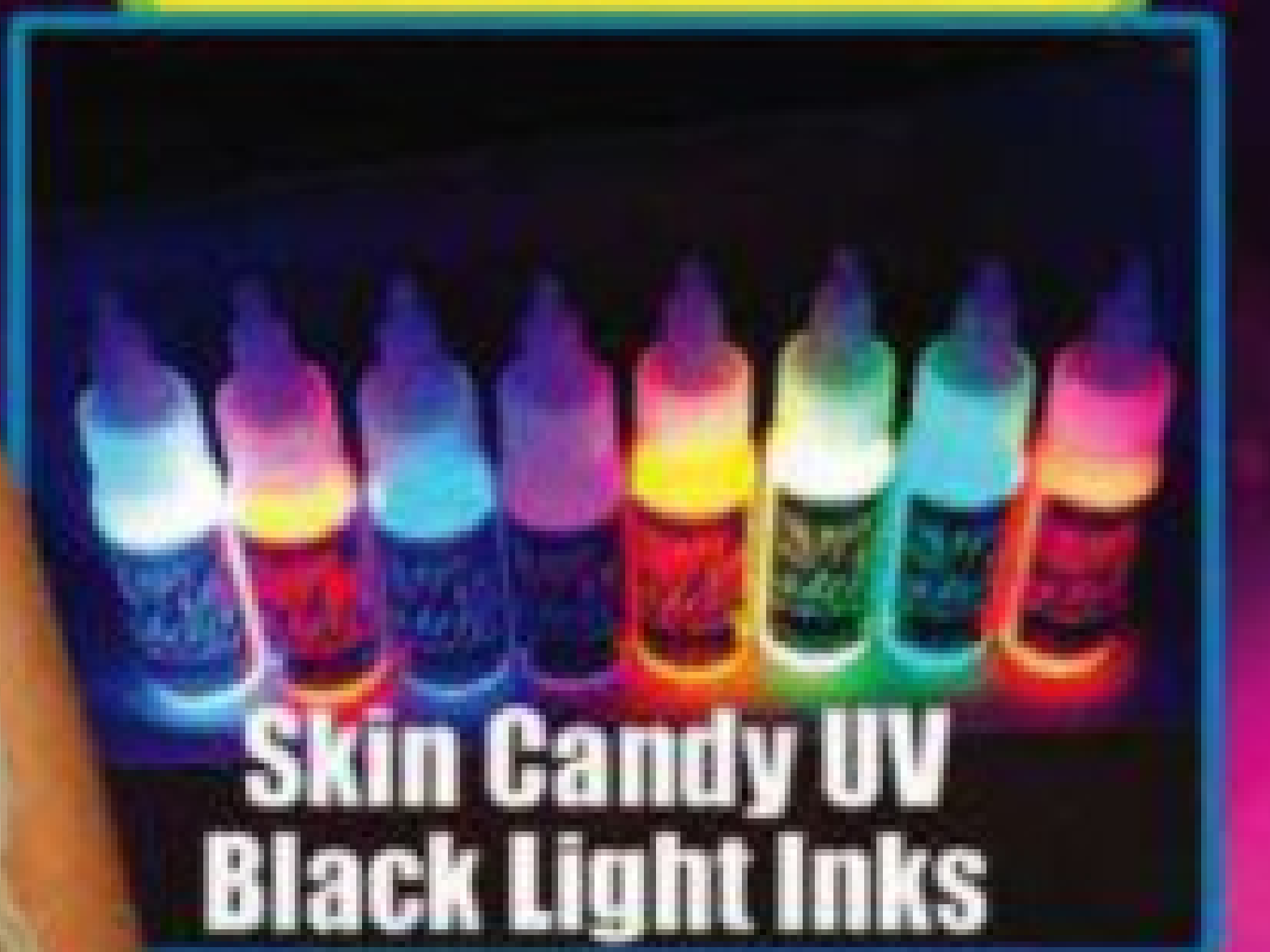
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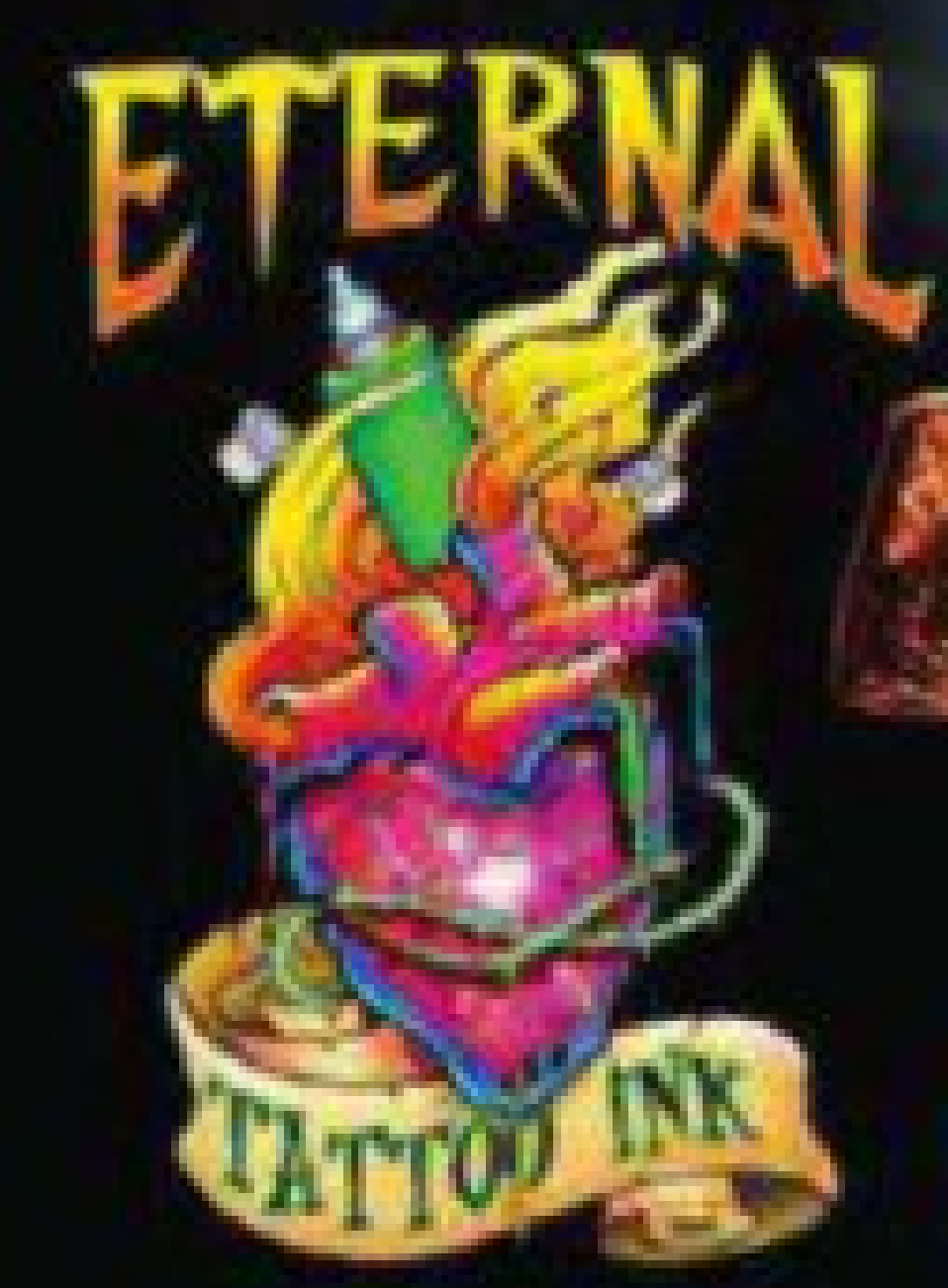
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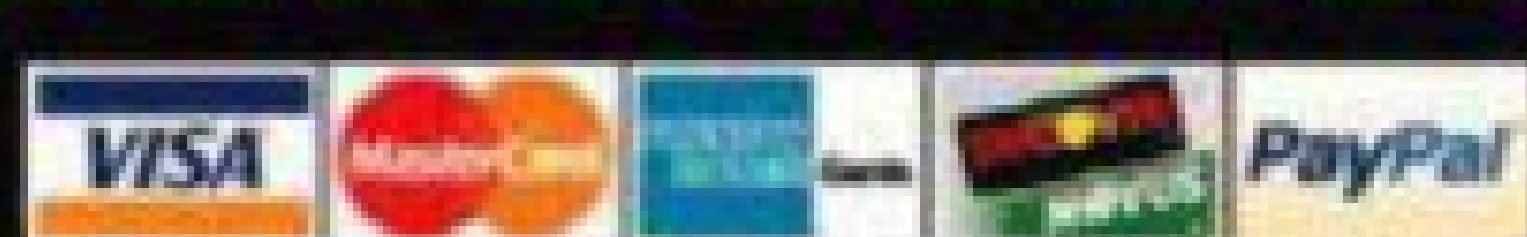
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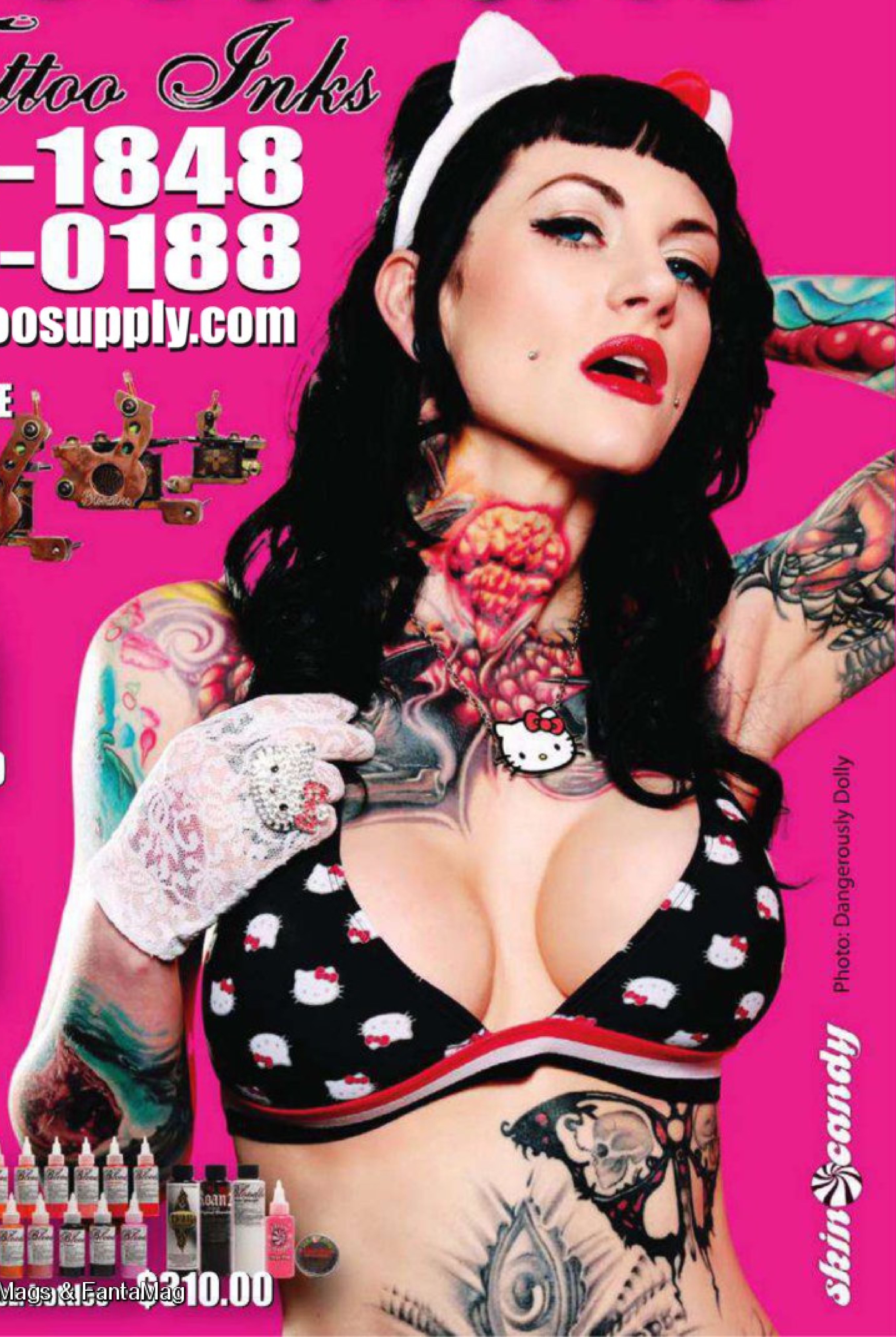


Photo: Dangerously Dolly

skin candy



JOHNNY NOBODY

The Man Behind the Name

By Chris Pfouts

In Murfreesboro, a city of a little more than 100,000 souls that bills itself as “The Heart of Tennessee,” a man by the name of Johnny Nobody spends his days tattooing the citizenry. By almost anyone’s measure, Johnny Nobody is a successful cat. He and his wife, Brix Nobody, who works as a tattooed model, have a home on the golf course, four children, and dogs. Nobody has 16-plus years of tattooing under his belt and now hosts an annual convention. But there’s that name.

The tattoo world is awash in handles, monikers, nicknames, stage names, noms de guerre, however you want to call them. What makes Johnny Nobody’s name different is that it’s legally his and has been since he was 8 years old. His middle name is Deathstar. Yeah, really.

How does a kid get legally named Johnny Deathstar Nobody? He got it from his mother, as a birthday present. His mother was a hippie and the little family lived in New York City’s Greenwich Village. When he turned 8, Mom was tight for cash so she gave him something that was relatively cheap—a name change.

Take a moment and reflect on something like going through customs. Must be fun, right? “No,” he said. “It’s not.” He usually has to produce his passport, his driver’s license, credit cards and a whole sheaf of other wallet paper to prove it’s his real name. Police officers, Nobody said, will often confiscate his driver’s license on the theory that it’s a phony. “When they realize it’s not they mail it back,” he said. As a cyber insult, Facebook refused to let him register with his real name. They made him change the spelling to Nobodee, which is where you can find him, Johnny Deathstar Nobodee.

In April of this year, Nobody hosted the inaugural session of The Needle Art Expo in Murfreesboro. It was a success, with 3,000 conventioners through the door to get work from around 40 artists.

Story/KEGG.COM


Johnny Nobody

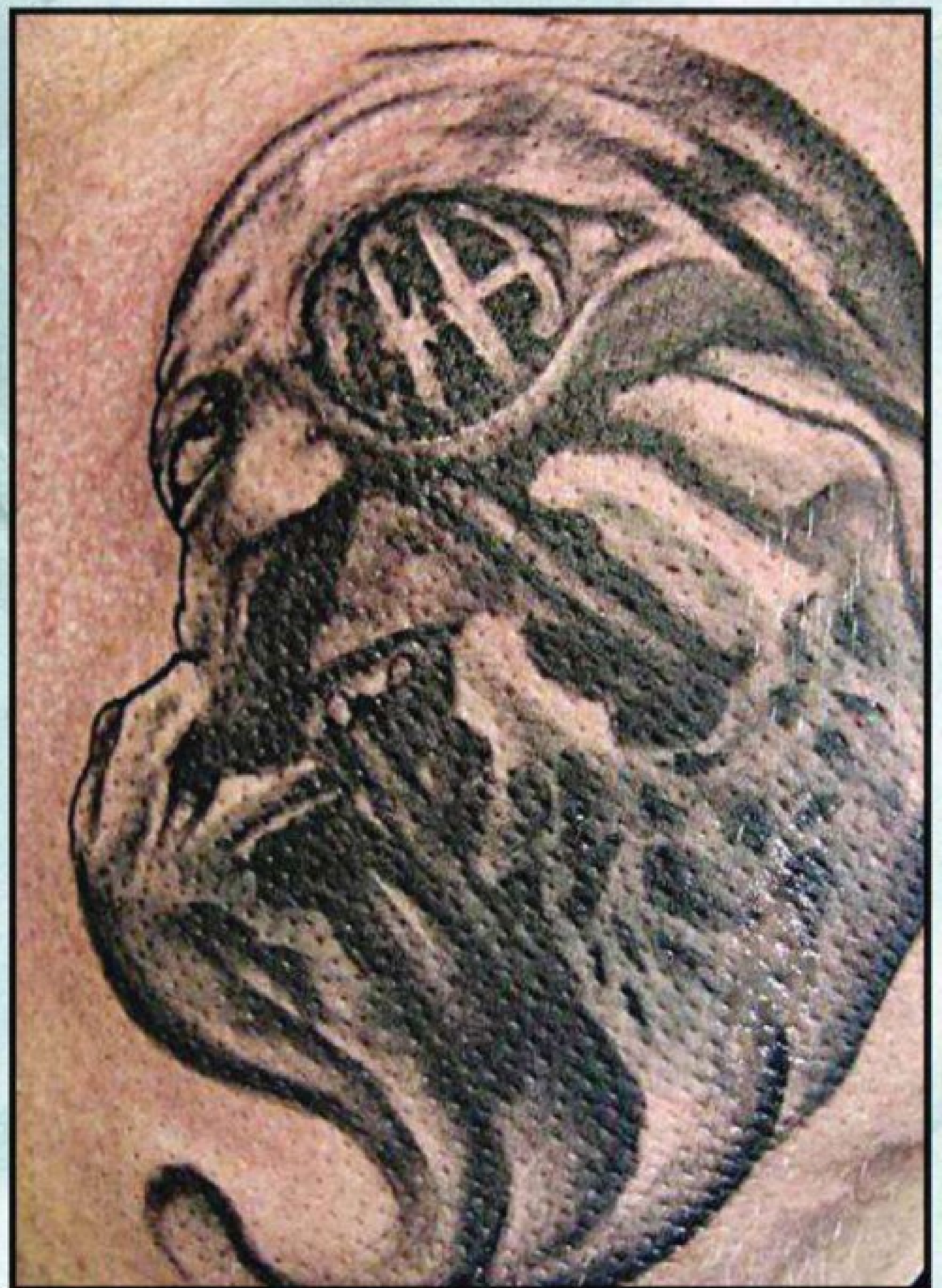
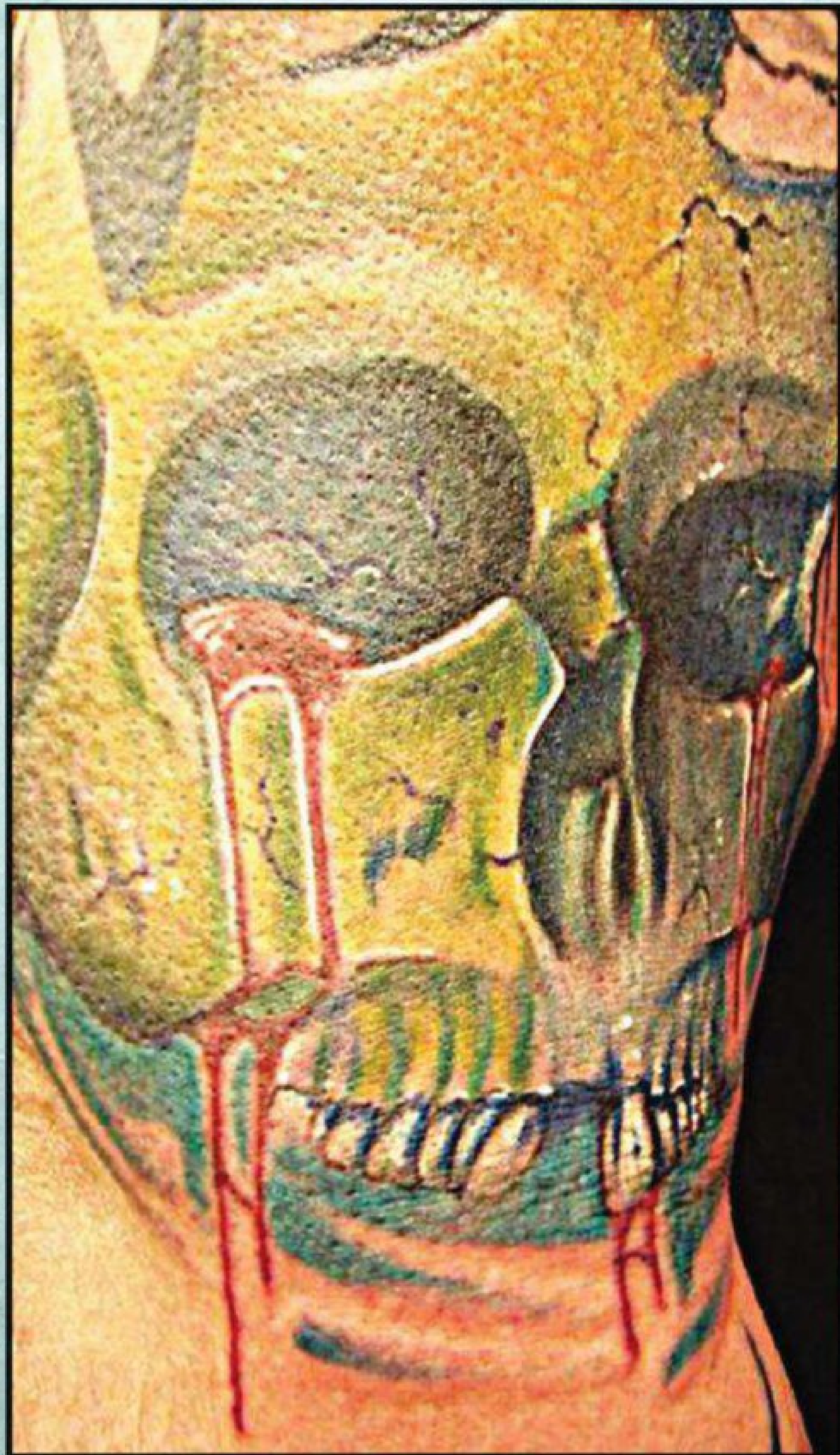
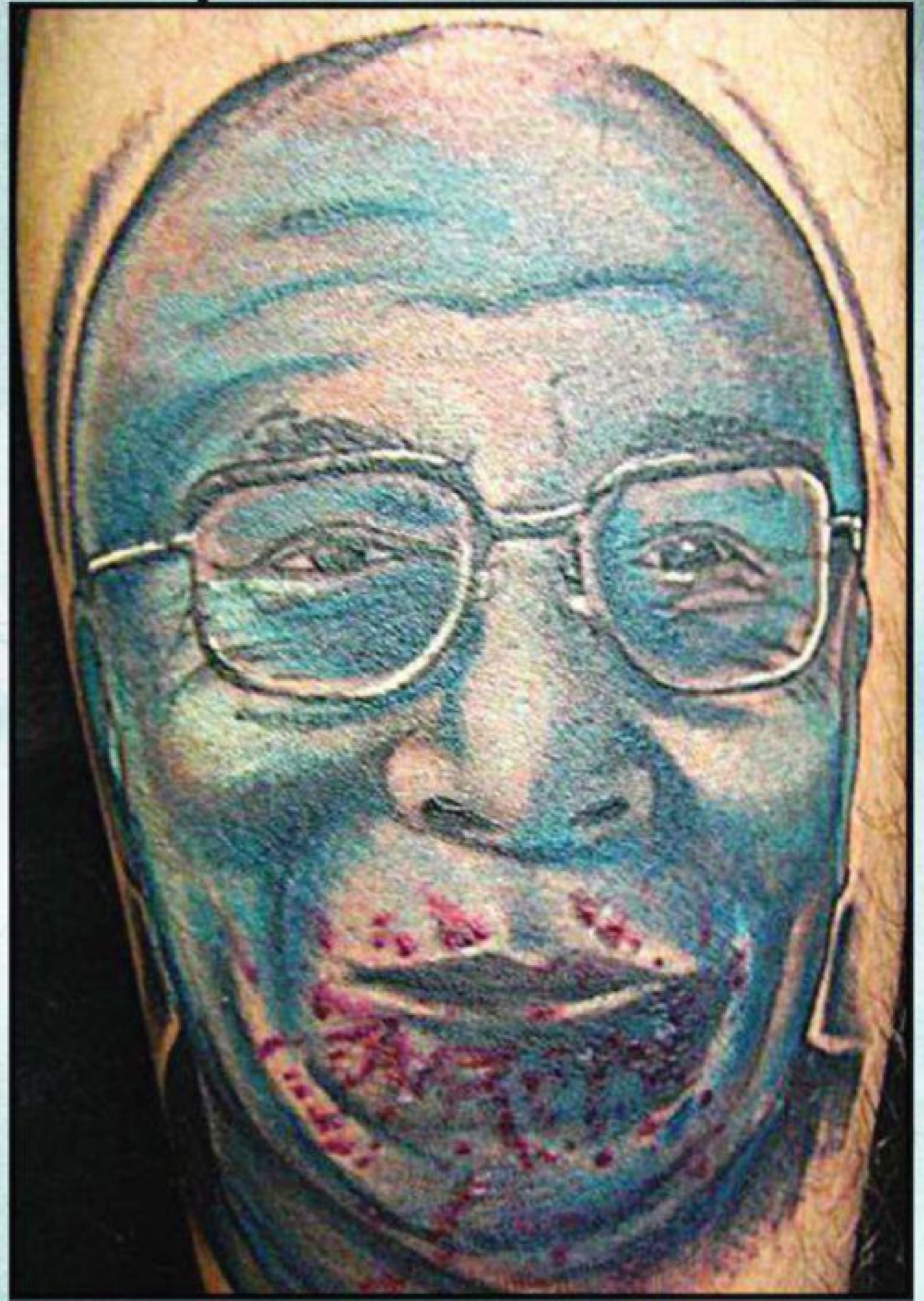
The ground rules of the Needle Art Expo reflected Nobody's art-first philosophy of the business. He didn't let any of the artists have flash on their table or in the booth. And there was no thermofax machine on the premises. Every piece had to be drawn specifically to fit the client. "I figured if we were artists, if that's part of the job title, then that's what we should do," he said. There was some early dissension in the ranks of artists, but eventually things settled down to the point where "a couple artists wanted to come back next year if I'd do it the same way again."

Nobody has already picked out a new venue for the 2012 edition of the show.

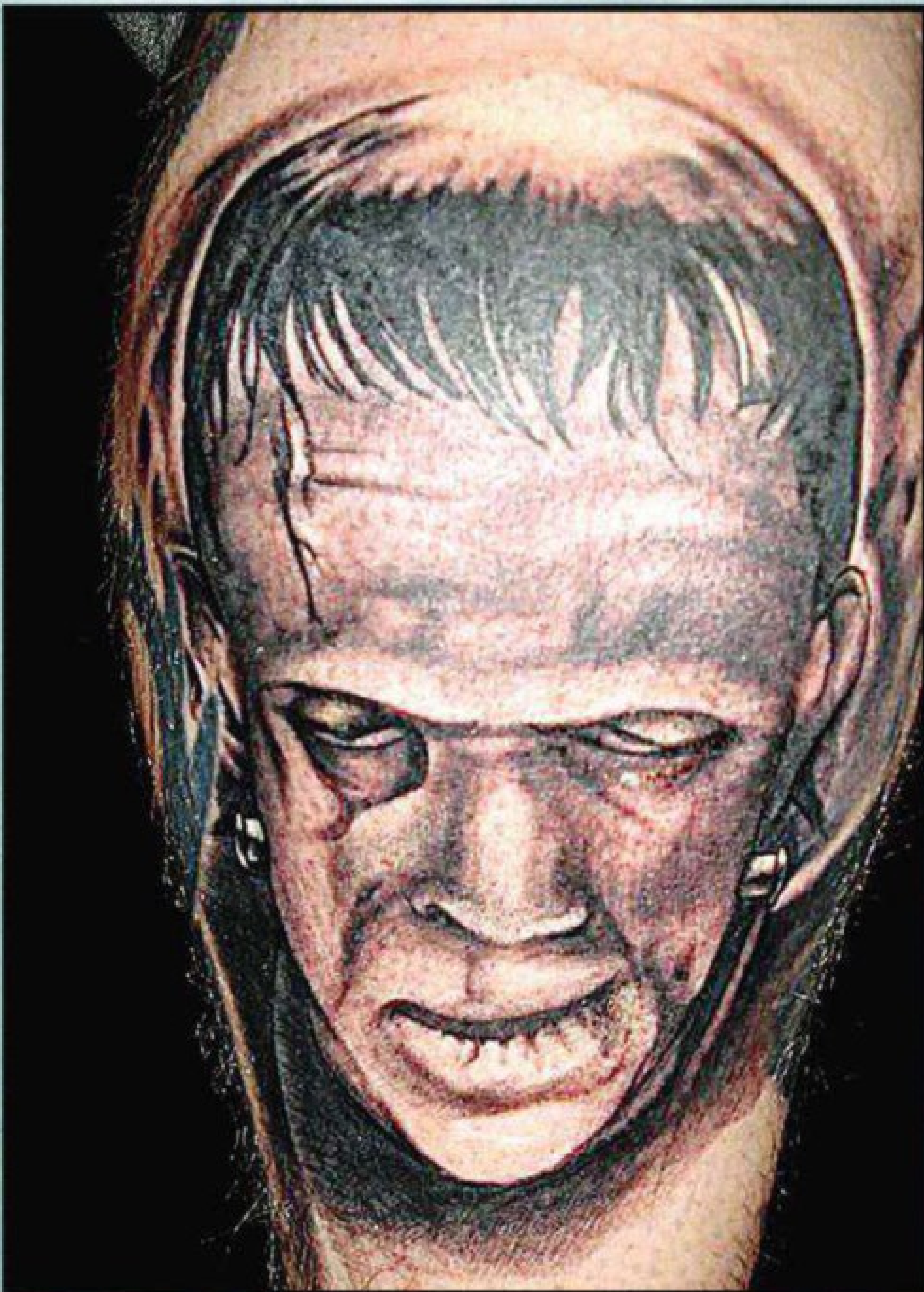
As for his own tattooing, he said, "people seem to think of me as a portrait guy. But after 16 years in the business, I like to think I can handle anything."

"And I usually stay on the darker side of stuff," he said. "I've been trying to branch out but they won't let me." His personal tastes don't run to horror so much as Star Wars—as befits a guy whose middle name is Deathstar. But the demand for horror remains high.

You can find Johnny Nobody at Straight Edge Tattoo in Murfreesboro, Tenn. Check out the gory details of next year's Needle Art Expo at www.needleartexpo.com. 

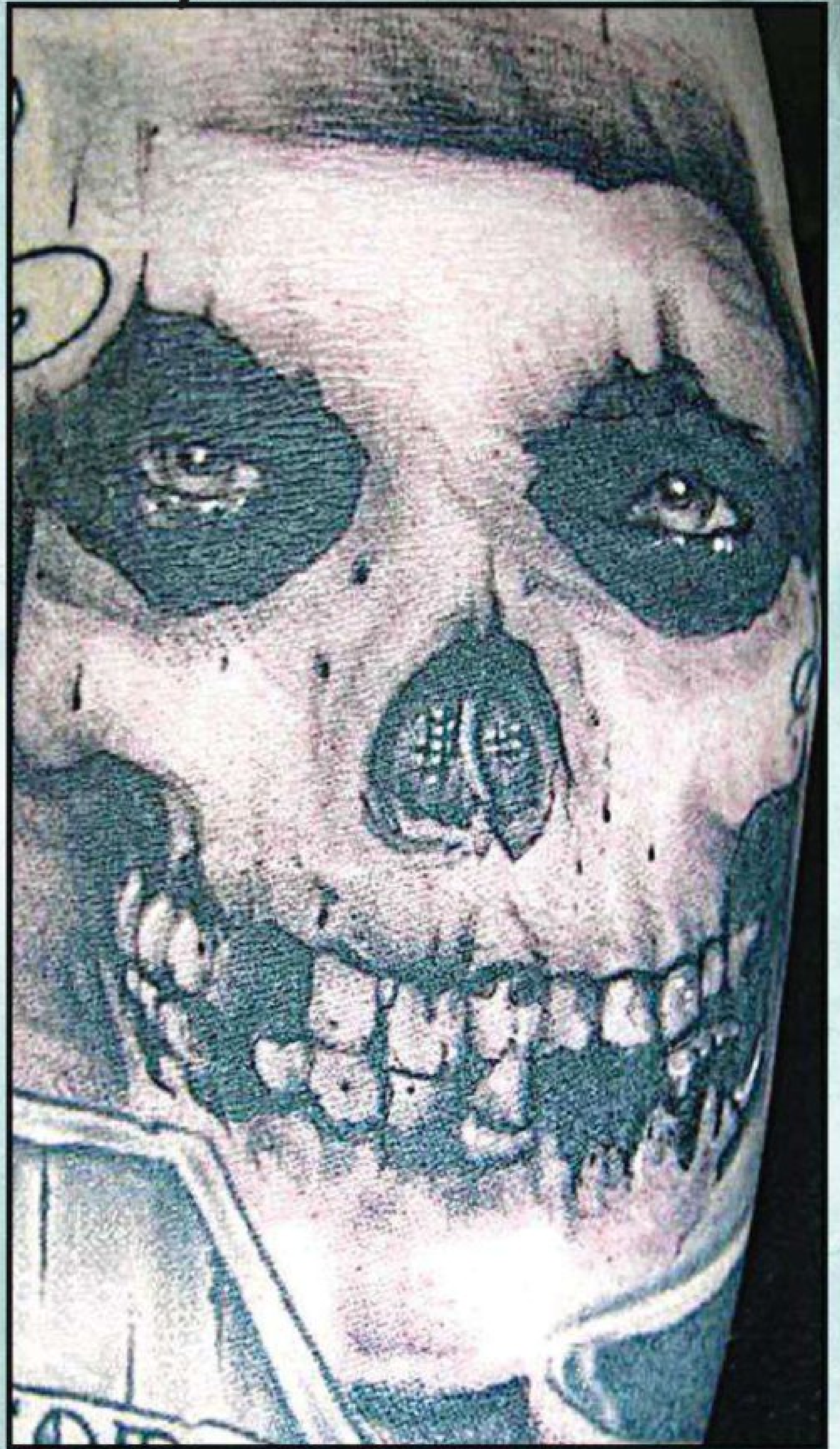


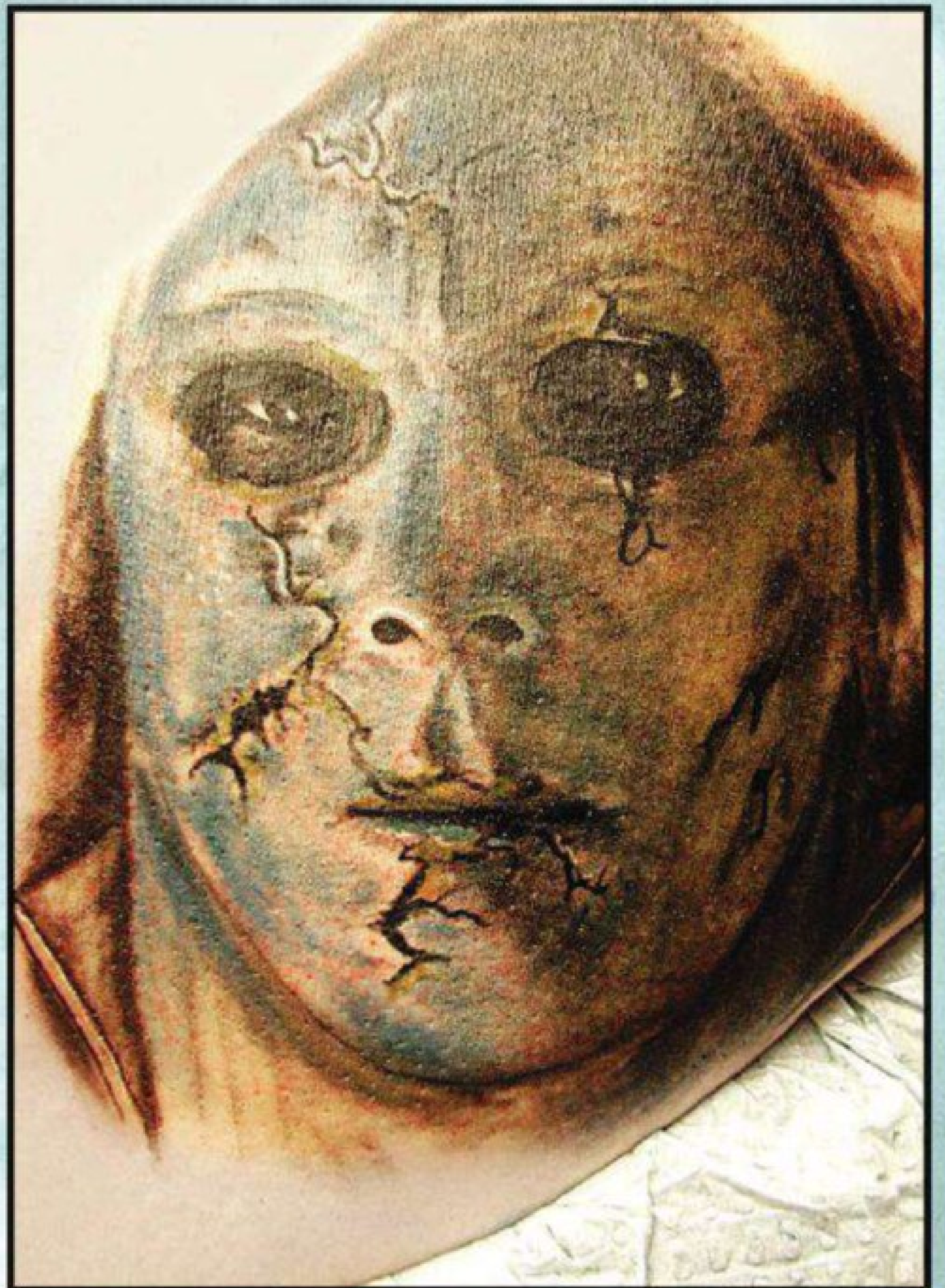
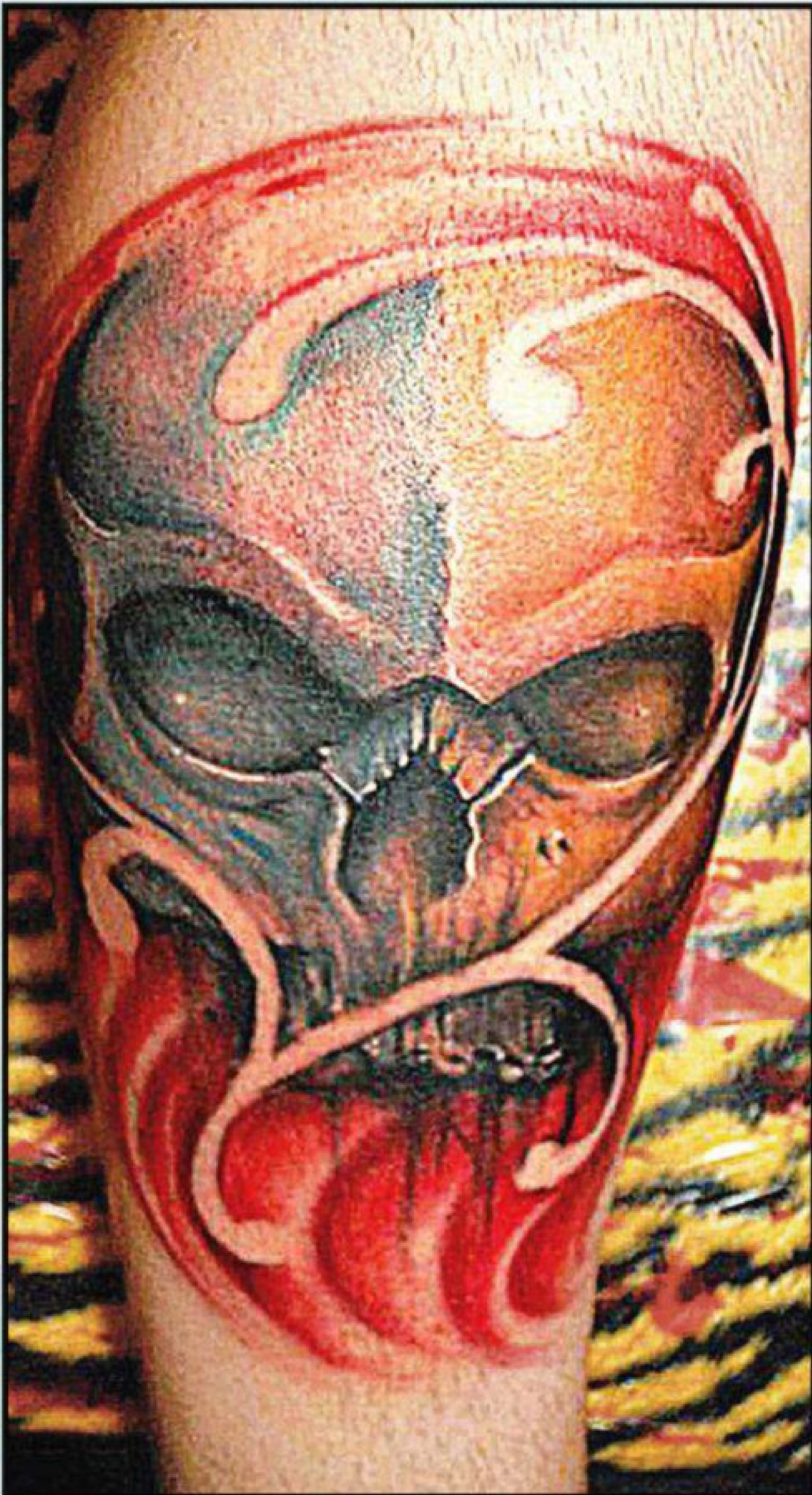
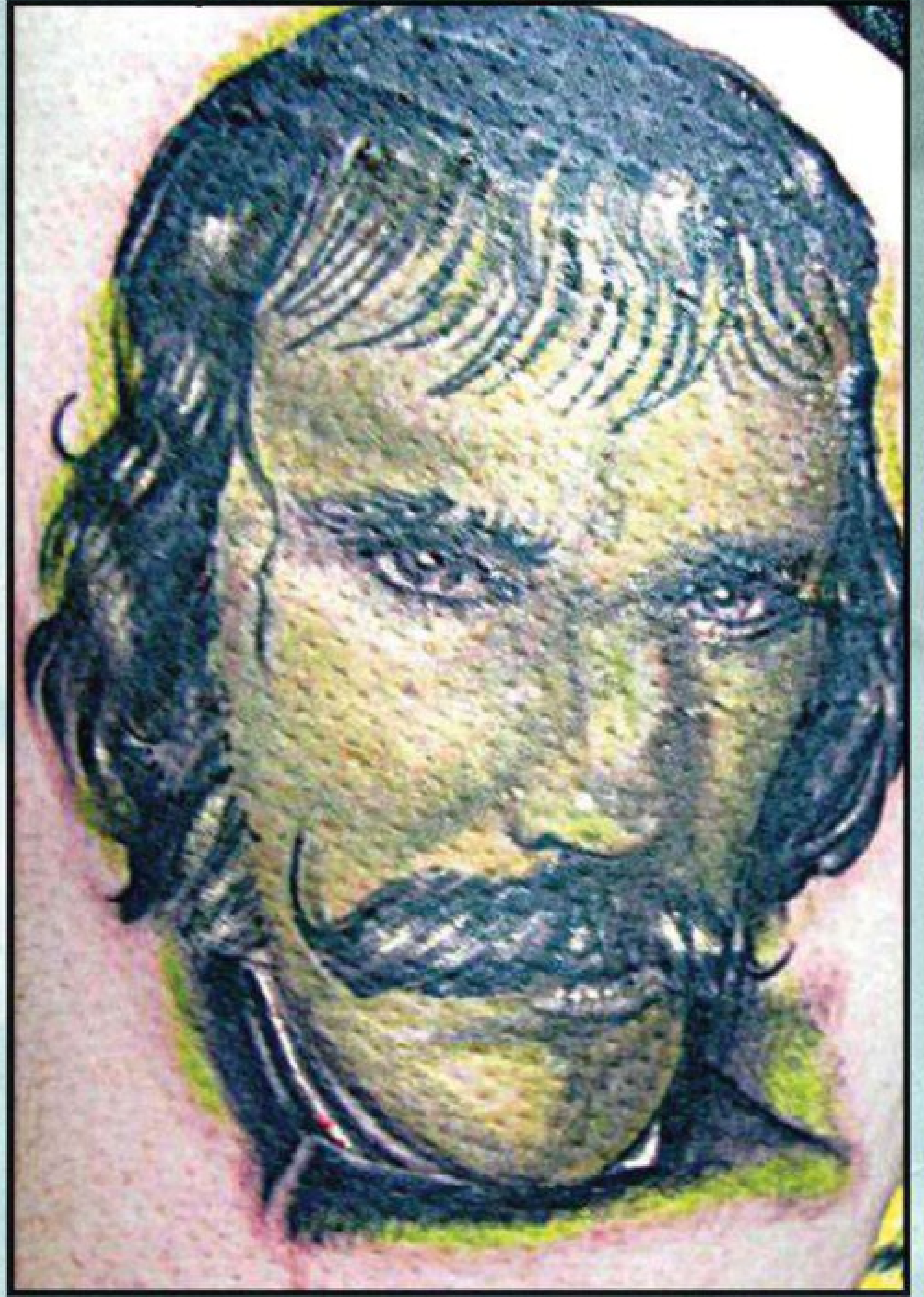




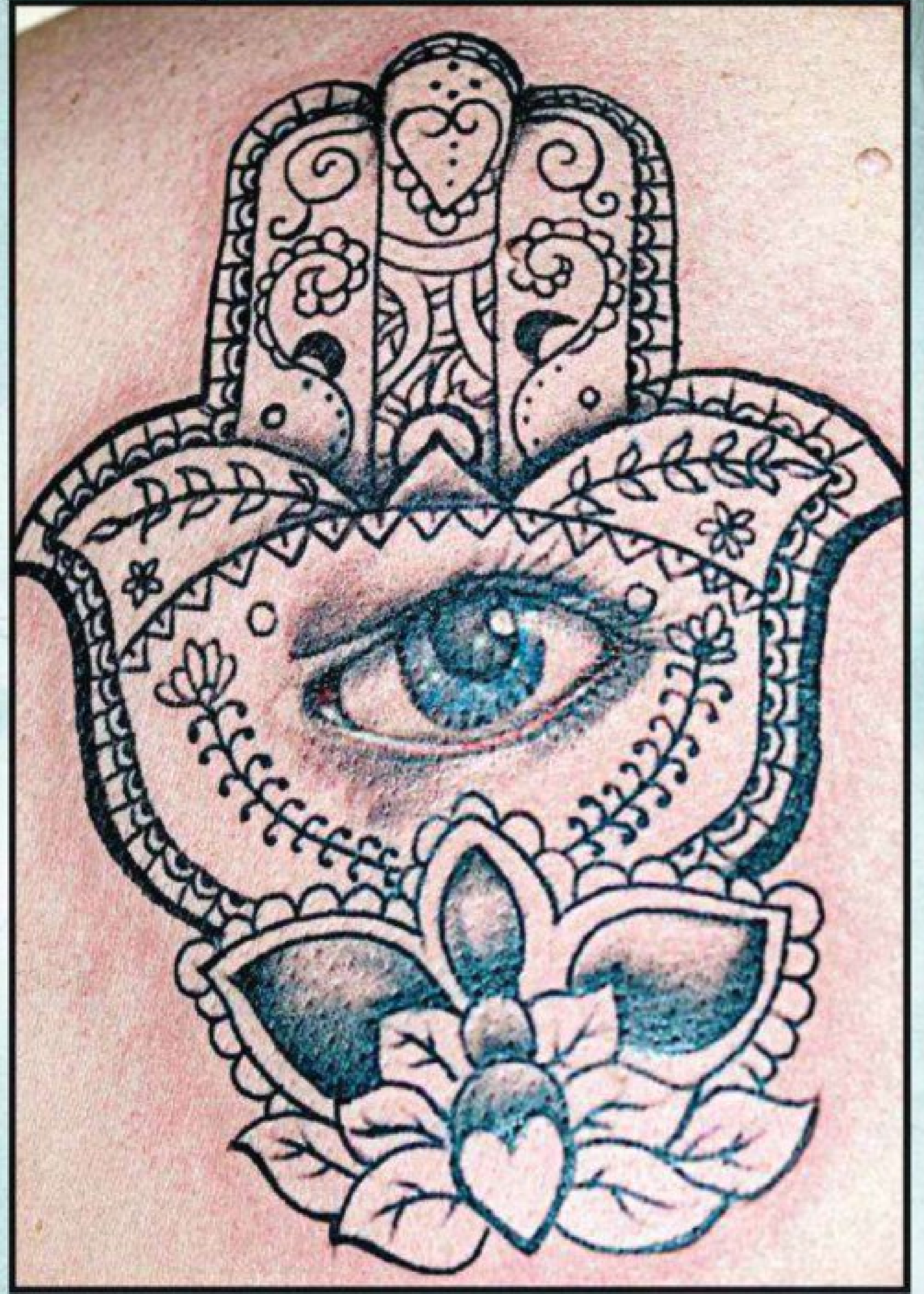
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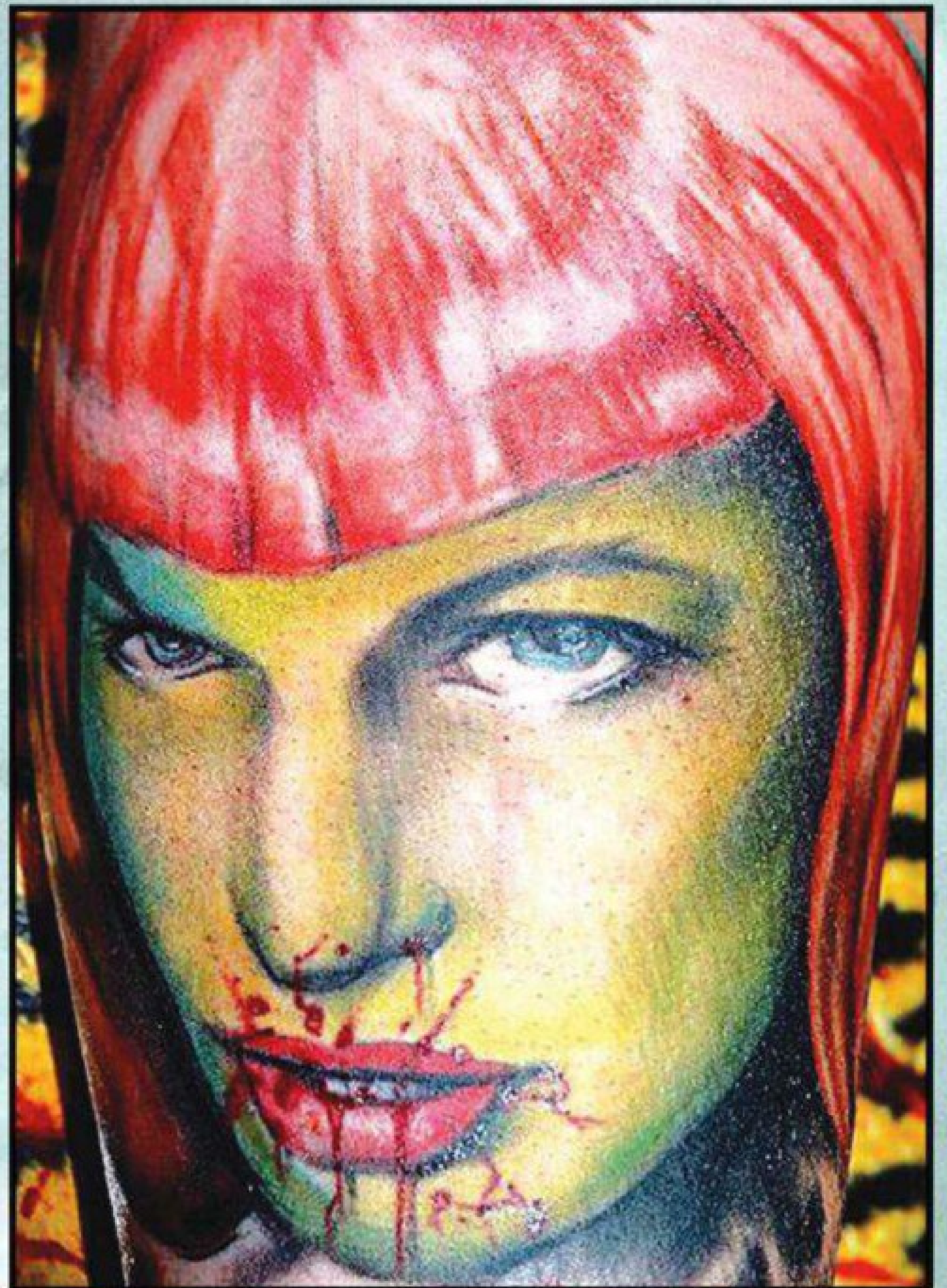
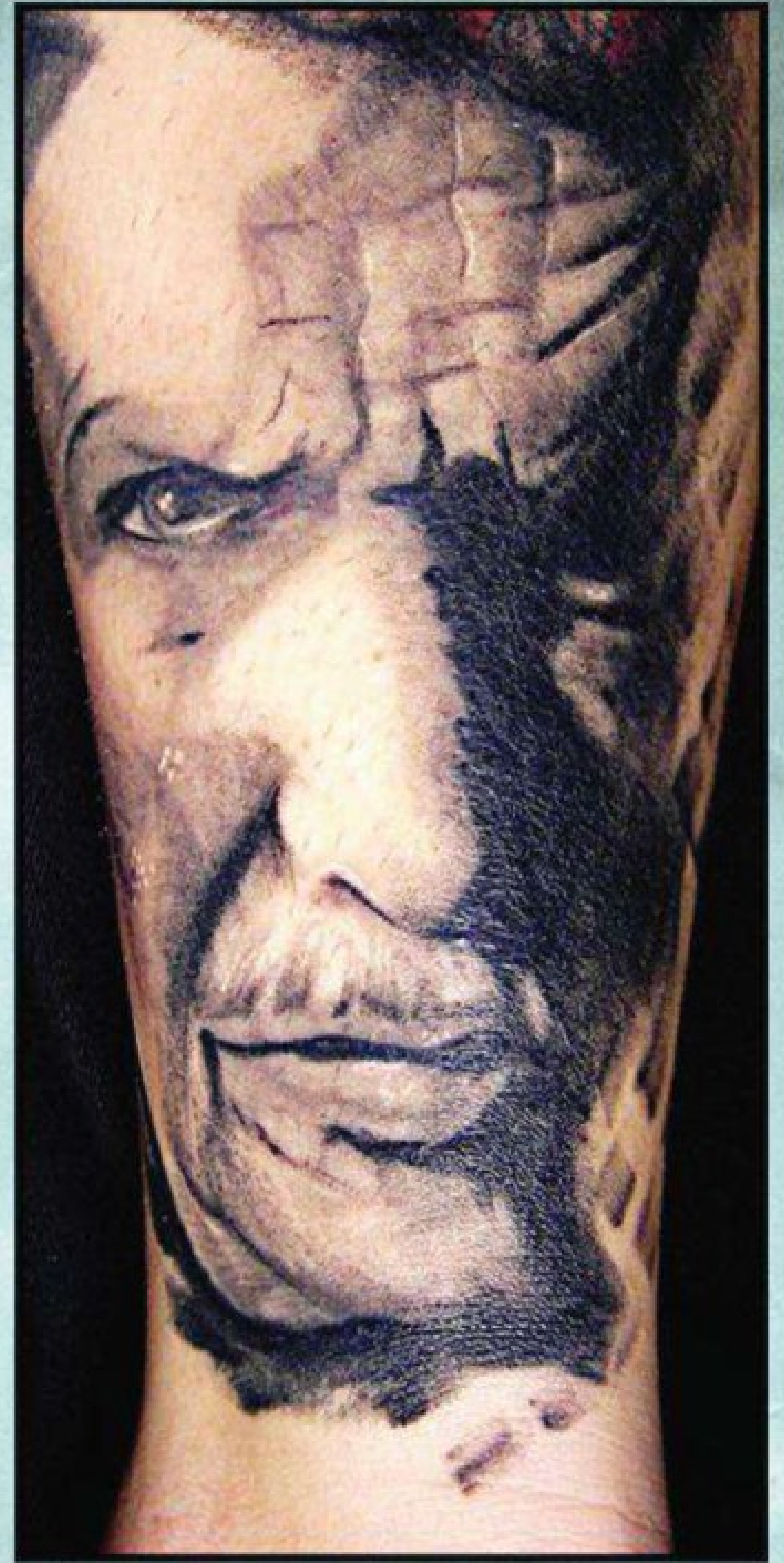
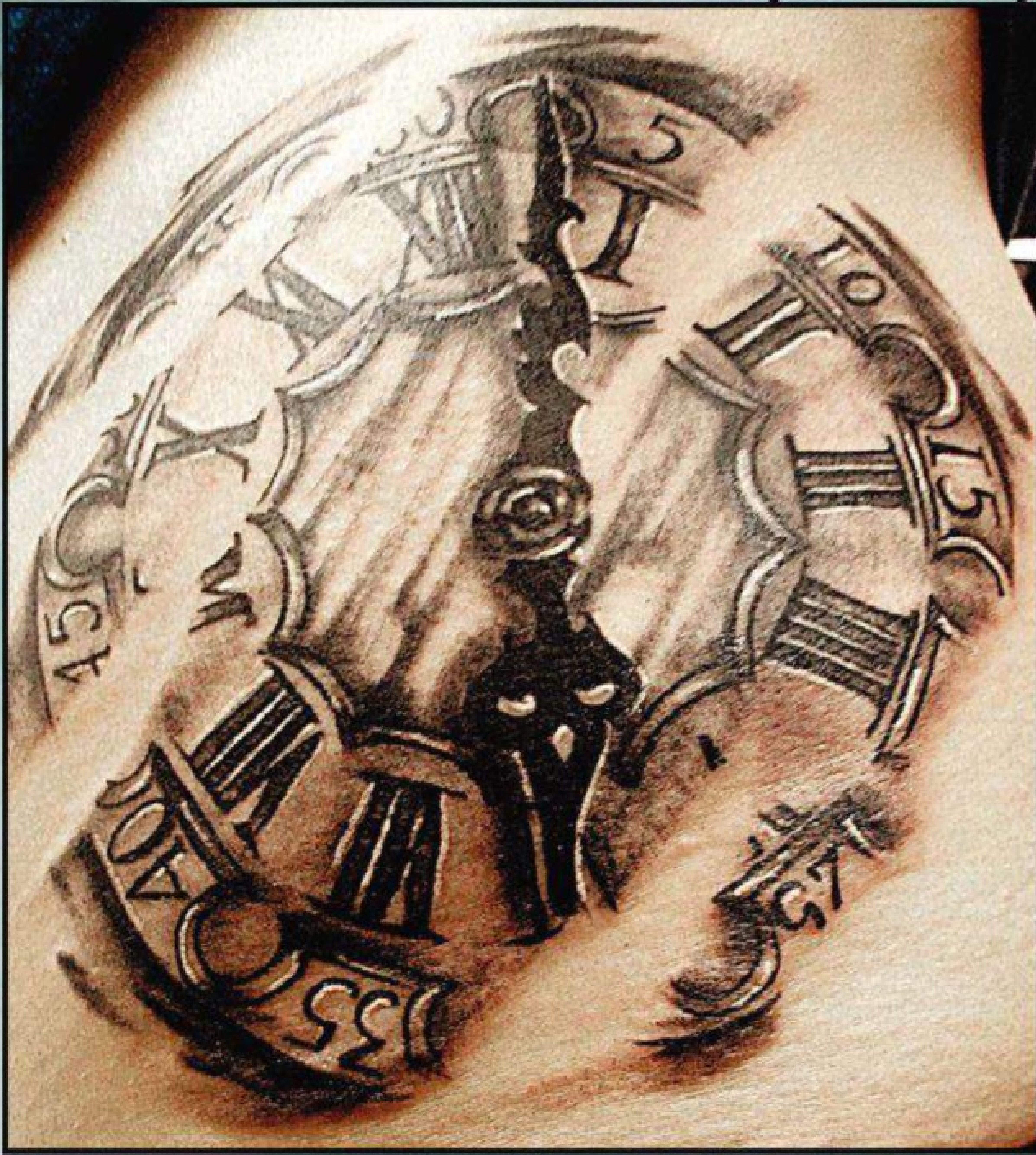




Johnny Nobody



Johnny Nobody





Johnny Nobody





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Kelly Doty's Creative Calling

By Amanda Stephan

Easthampton, Massachusetts is a picturesque New England village. Rumor has it that

Easthampton served as the model for Whoville in Dr. Seuss's "How the Grinch Stole Christmas." Nestled in this charming hamlet is Off the Map, a tattoo studio that delivers amazing tattoos and serves as a focus for shared inspiration within the tattoo community. It is the studio that artist Kelly Doty calls home.

"I've wanted to be a tattoo artist since I was little," she said. "I became extremely interested in body modification when I was in middle school and it just never stopped being exciting to me. I had always drawn and painted, and it was all I ever wanted to do, so tattooing just seemed like what I was meant to do."

Part of her early interest is rooted in Doty's exploration of the tattoos on her grandfather. "My Grandpa has tattoos on his arms that he got when he was a teenager," she said. "Looking at them now, I'm impressed with how well they've held up. But when I was little I could not figure out what the hell they were. One is a skull with a snake, I think. But I used to make up things it could possibly be. 'Is it a teddy bear eating a branch? Is it a deadly sea creature? Why is that hedgehog playing the oboe?'"

It was Doty's grandfather who helped foster her early blossoming interest in tattooing. He took her to Industrial Strength Supply to get all of her first inks, needles, and tubes. Her grandfather isn't the only family member to offer support in Doty's pursuit of tattooing. Most of Doty's machines have been birthday gifts from her parents. "My mom wanted to be my first tattoo, but somehow I was able to talk her out of it," Doty said. "I did my fourth or fifth tattoo on her instead. Luckily, it's on her ankle and I don't have to see it too often, but I know it's there. It's like having your ninth grade class picture always present and your mom keeps showing people, because she's mom and she's proud—but you're just like, 'Jesus Mom, put it away!'"

Doty had the usual McGigs on the way to the skin arts. She believes that the jobs that led up to her current career were important in filling her reservoir of artistic subject matter. Good thing, because they weren't fulfilling in any other way.

One gig really made an impression. "I worked in a music and movie store for five years before I started tattooing," she said. "It was a good way of building a knowledge of pop-culture."

In an effort to broaden her artistic horizon, Doty took whatever art classes were available at her high school. Once she had exhausted the roster of classes there, she enrolled in art school to study illustration. What she learned and learned quickly was that college was too expensive and that she was an unrepentantly terrible student. After a year of trying to make things work, she decided to leave school.

In October 2007, Doty began her tattoo apprenticeship, and since then, the tattoo community has become her art school.


Off the Map is a good place to expand visual horizons. The studio hosts the annual Paradise Artist's Retreat, which has enticed Doty to dabble in mediums beyond her artistic comfort zone. "I work with pen and ink, watercolor, colored pencils, and in the past few months I've taken up oil painting, which I really, really like," she said. "I'd been putting off oil painting for a long time because it's very intimidating."

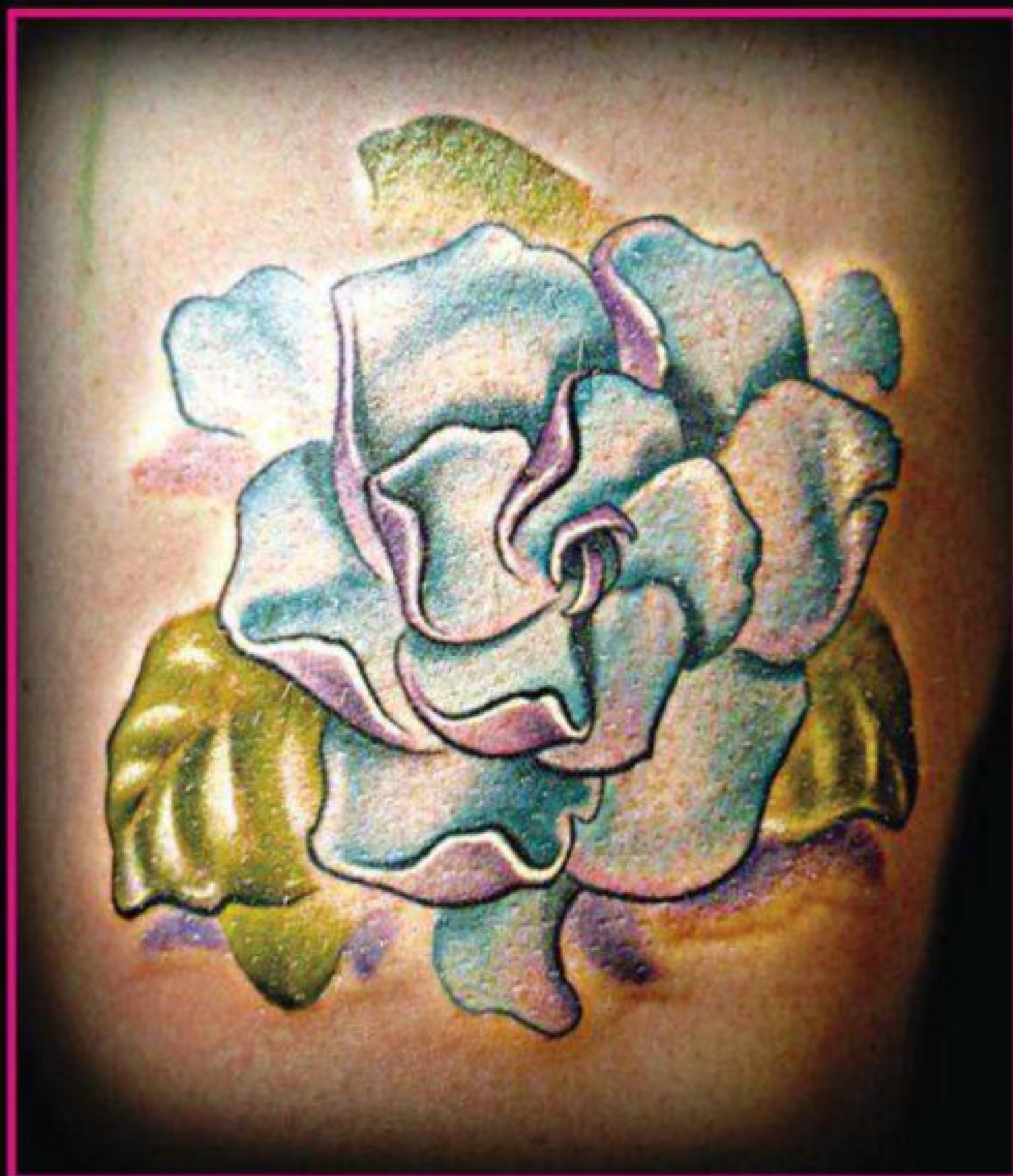
This past September the Retreat got her over that. It was, she said, "a fantastic long weekend of non-stop painting alongside some of my favorite artists." Doty came away motivated; that motivation took her to a new level as an artist. "So my fear of trying something new shifted to a fear of looking like some sort of asshole in front of a bunch of artists I really admire. I basically like to motivate myself through crippling fear, which is healthy."

In addition to the education that Doty receives from other artists, she pays close attention to the work of a number of lowbrow artists. She's particularly attracted to the work of Camille Rose Garcia, Mark Ryden, Greg "Craola" Simkins, and Tara McPherson. Doty scrutinizes how these artists use color in their work. "Color is of major importance to me, sometimes more important than the actual subject matter, to be honest," she said. "So the way those artists use their color really influences me."

Doty's own art might be described as Colorful Illustrative. She prefers to design themes involving bizarre creatures or objects that wouldn't exist otherwise. Her art explores a warped reality doused in vibrant color. "My color choices have a theme," she said. "I think and I try to portray a sort of darkness mixed with sweetness if it's applicable. That saccharine/creepy duality has always really appealed to me so it has a tendency to come out in most of my work."

In the final analysis, Doty sees nothing but good in her career. "I'm really happy that I get to make a living doing something so fulfilling," she said. "I'm able to make artwork alongside some of my best friends who happen to be incredibly talented artists. I get to travel the world, meet tons of exciting people, learn new things constantly, and I can be my dorky, awkward self the whole damn time. It's difficult to pinpoint what makes me feel proud and what makes me feel just so incredibly fortunate."

To reach Kelly Doty, call Off the Map Tattoo at (413) 527-6574 or contact her through her website, www.kellydotytattoo.com. 

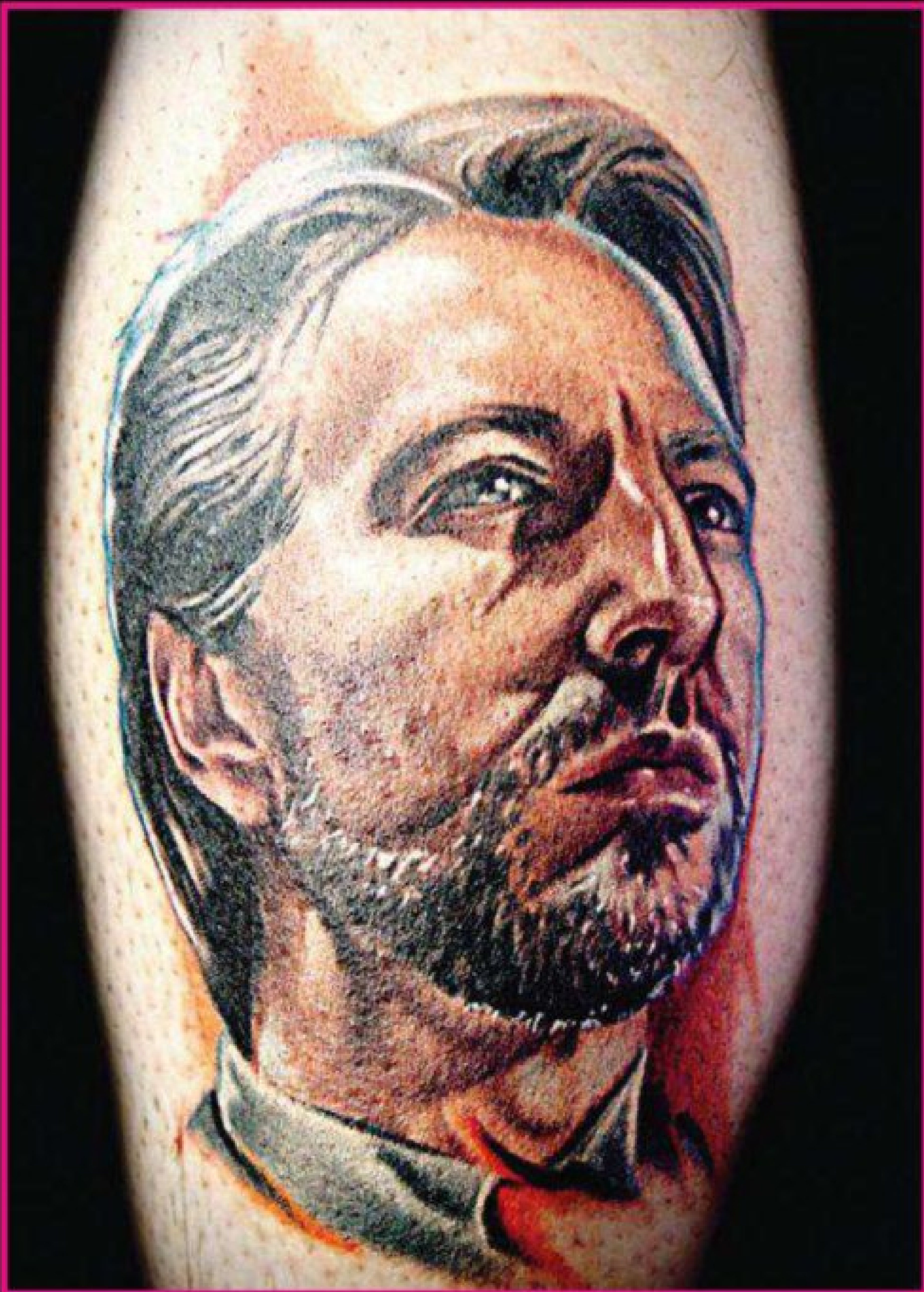


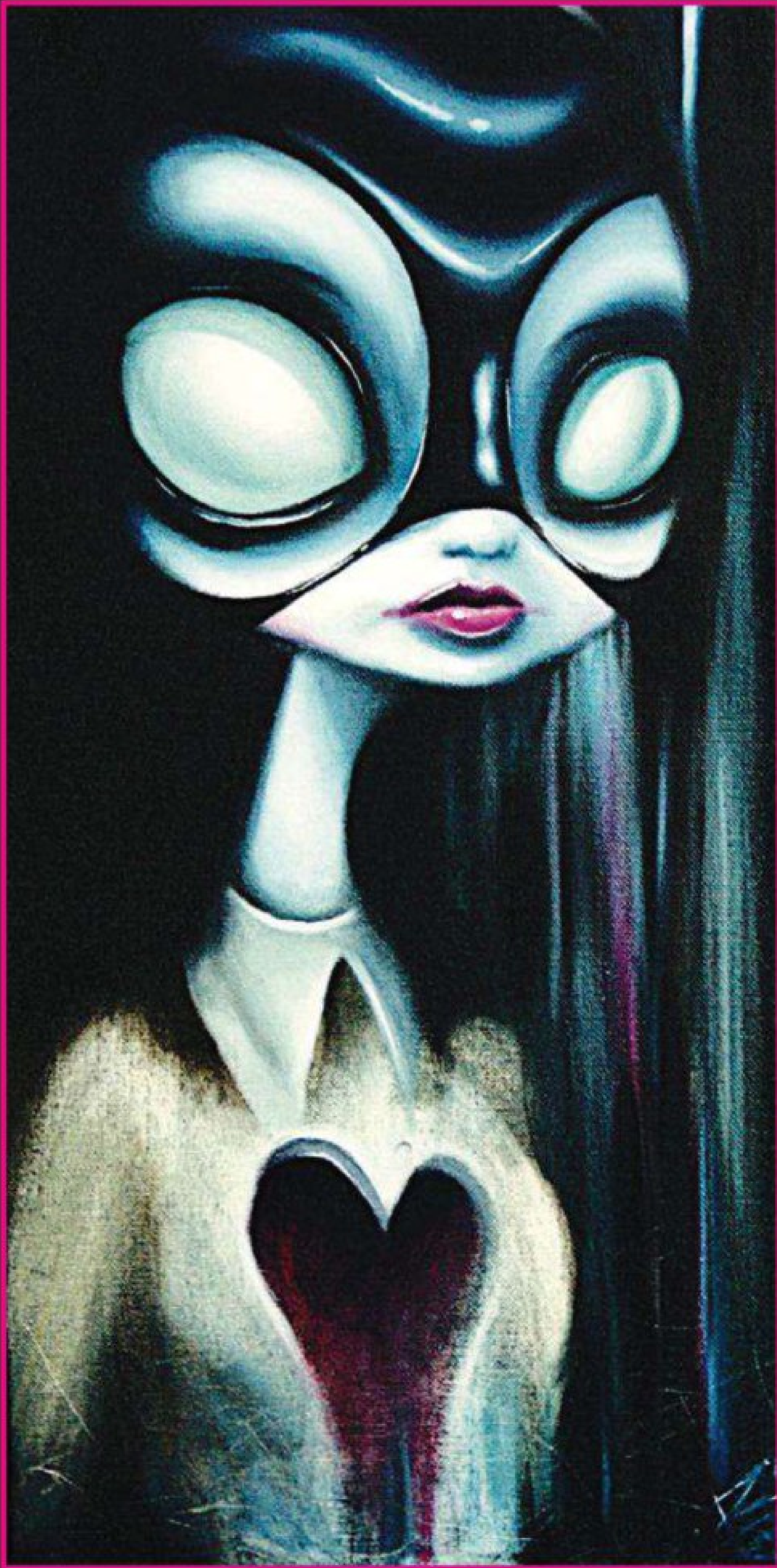
"Color is of major importance to me, sometimes more important than the actual subject matter."

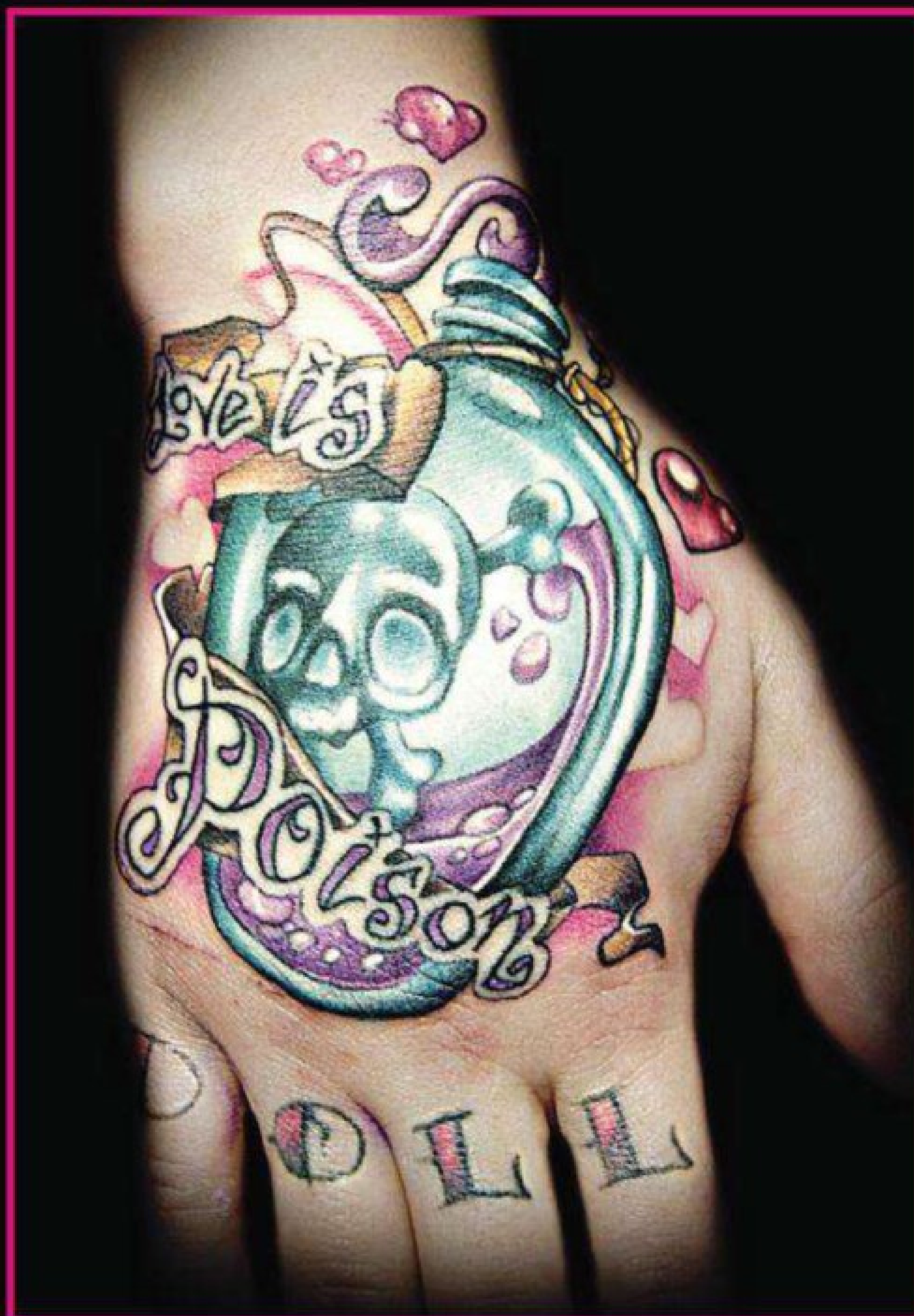
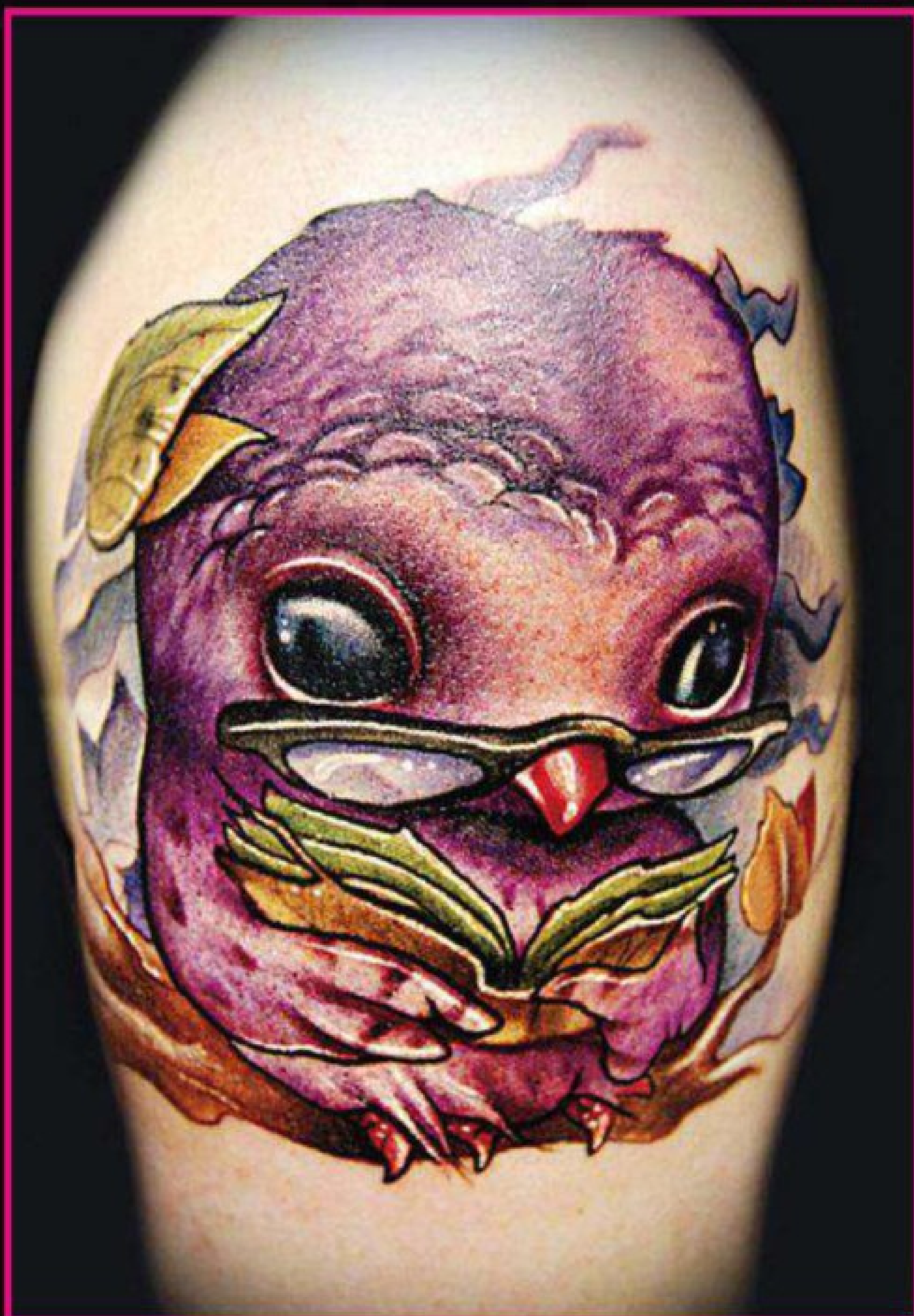
—Kelly Doty



KELLY DOTY

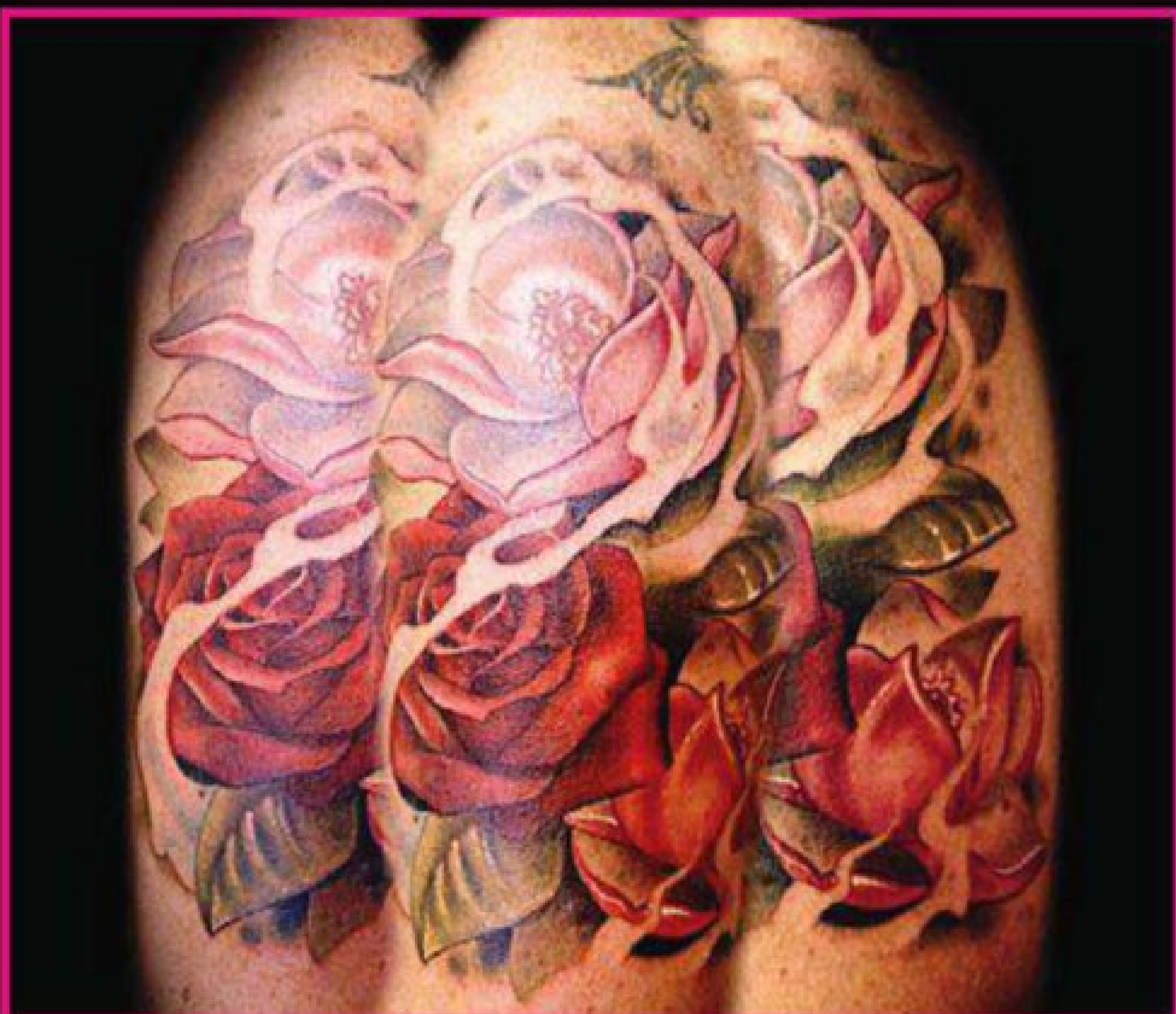




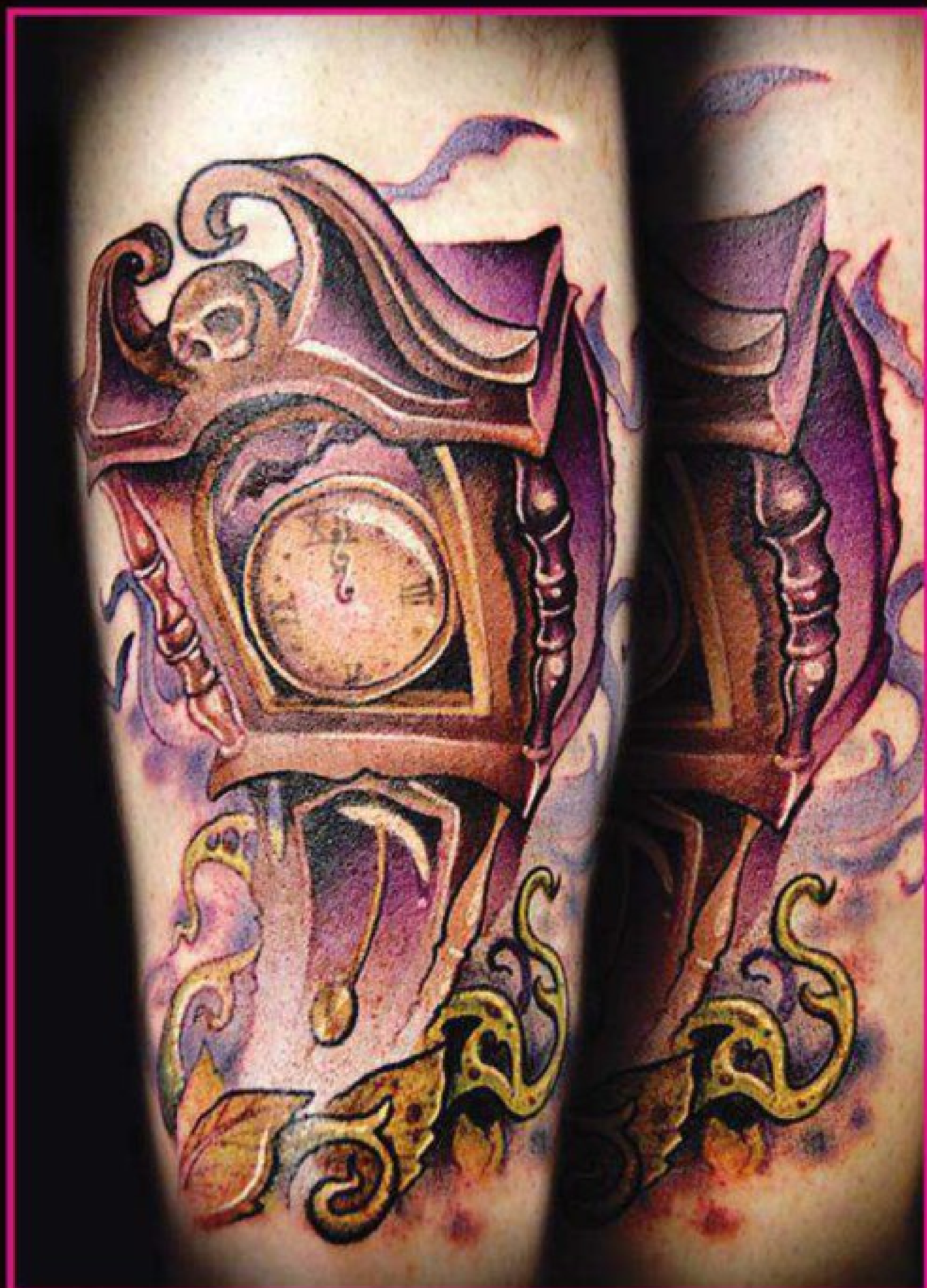
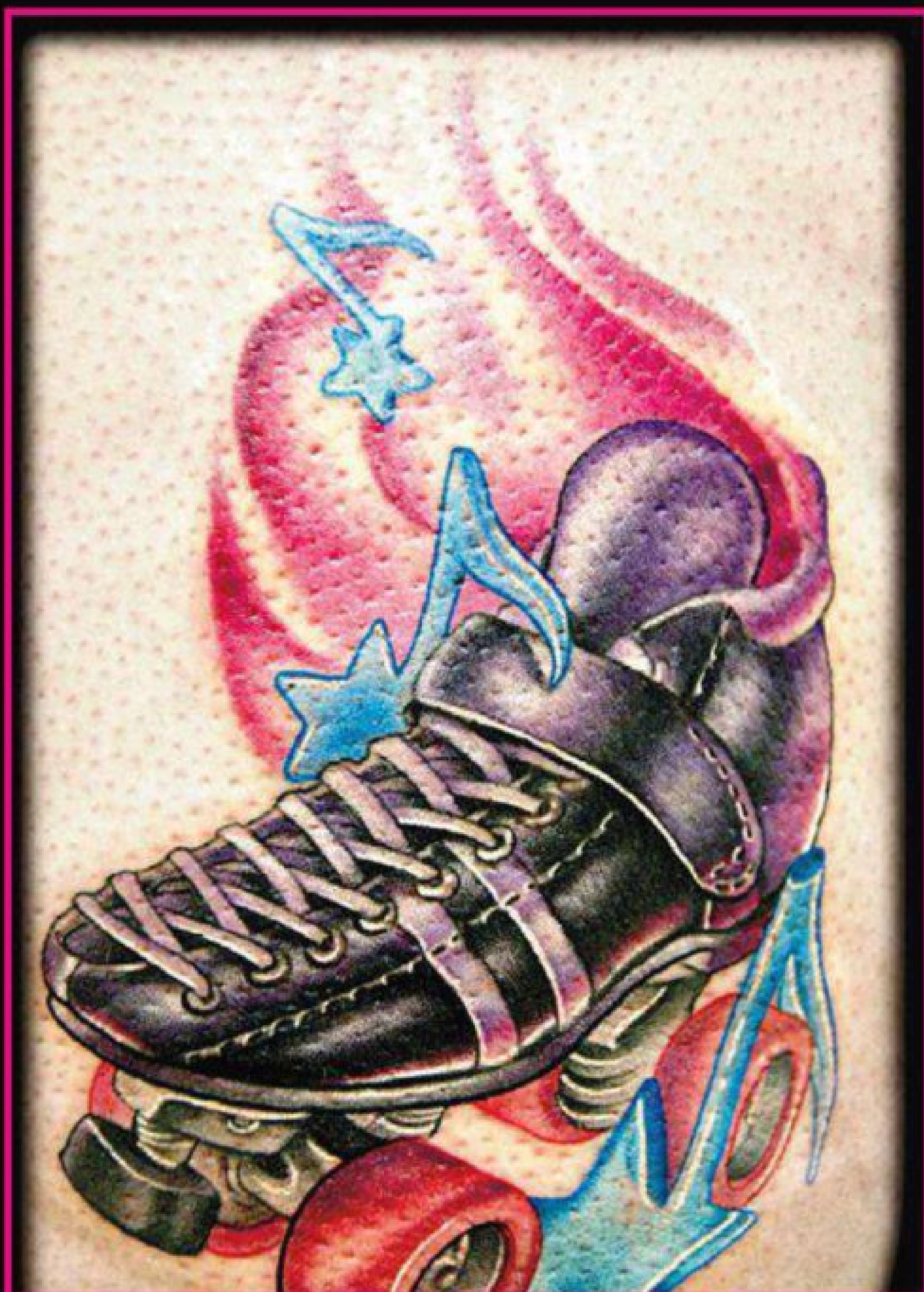
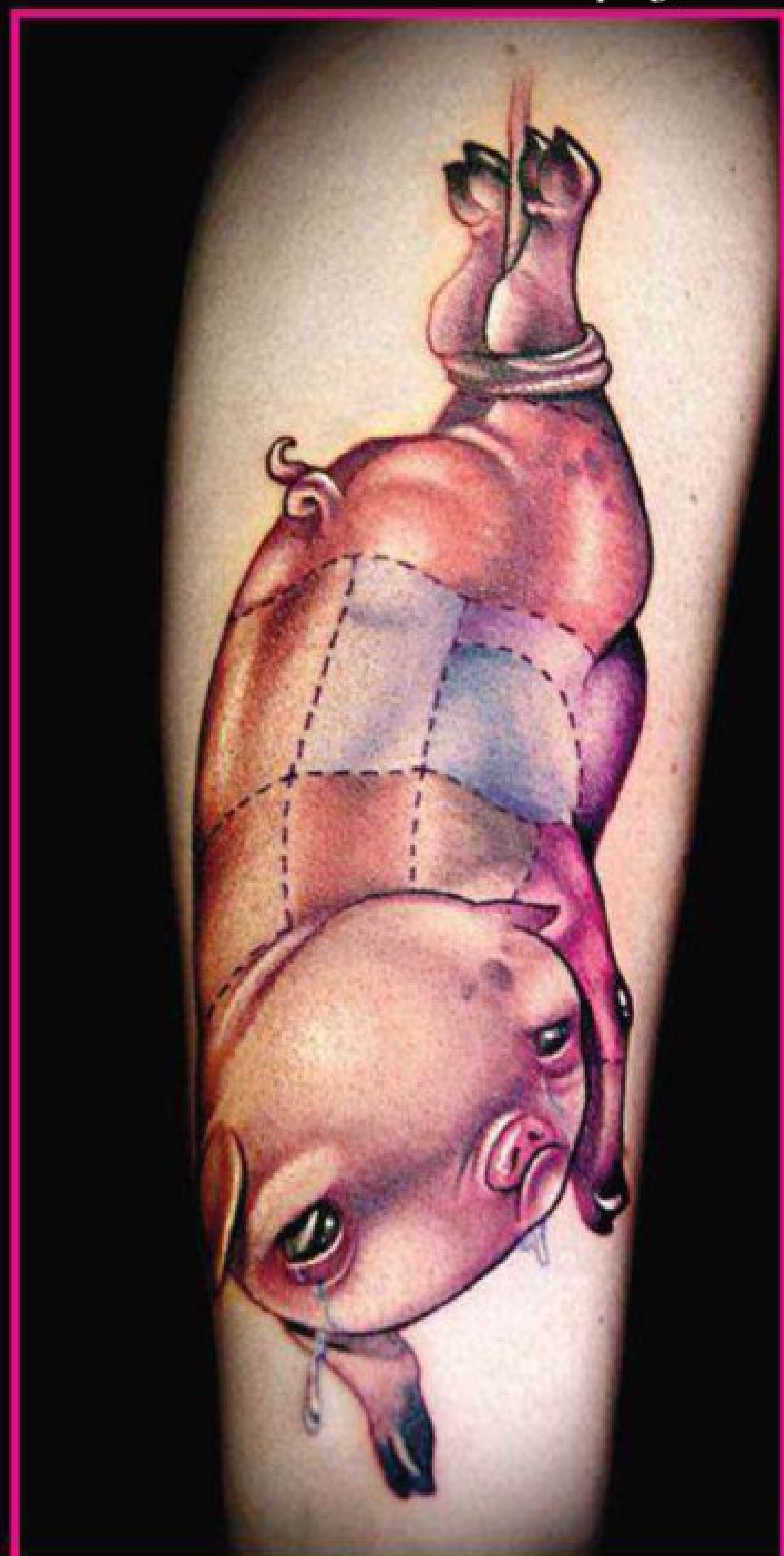




KELLY DOTY







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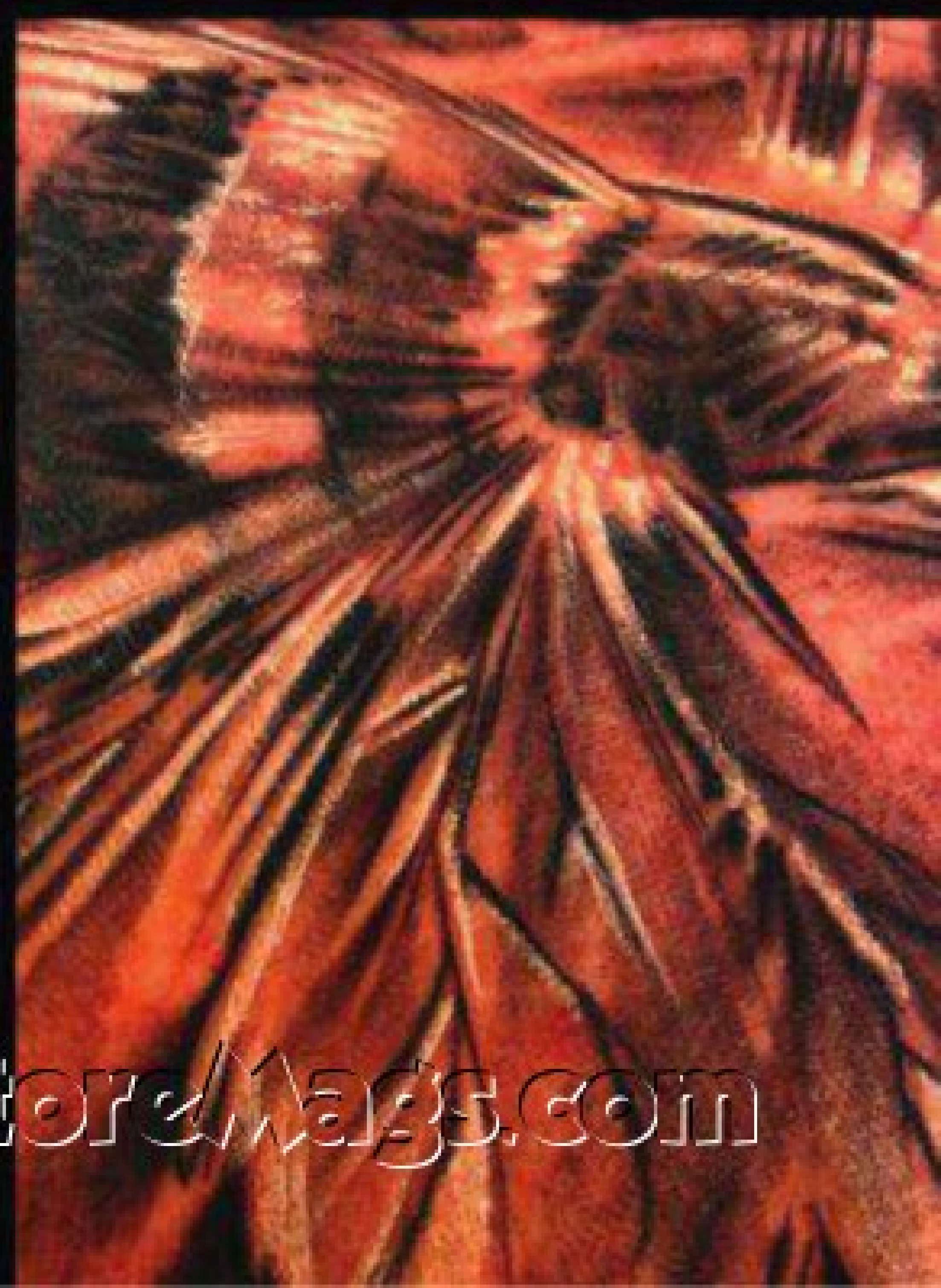
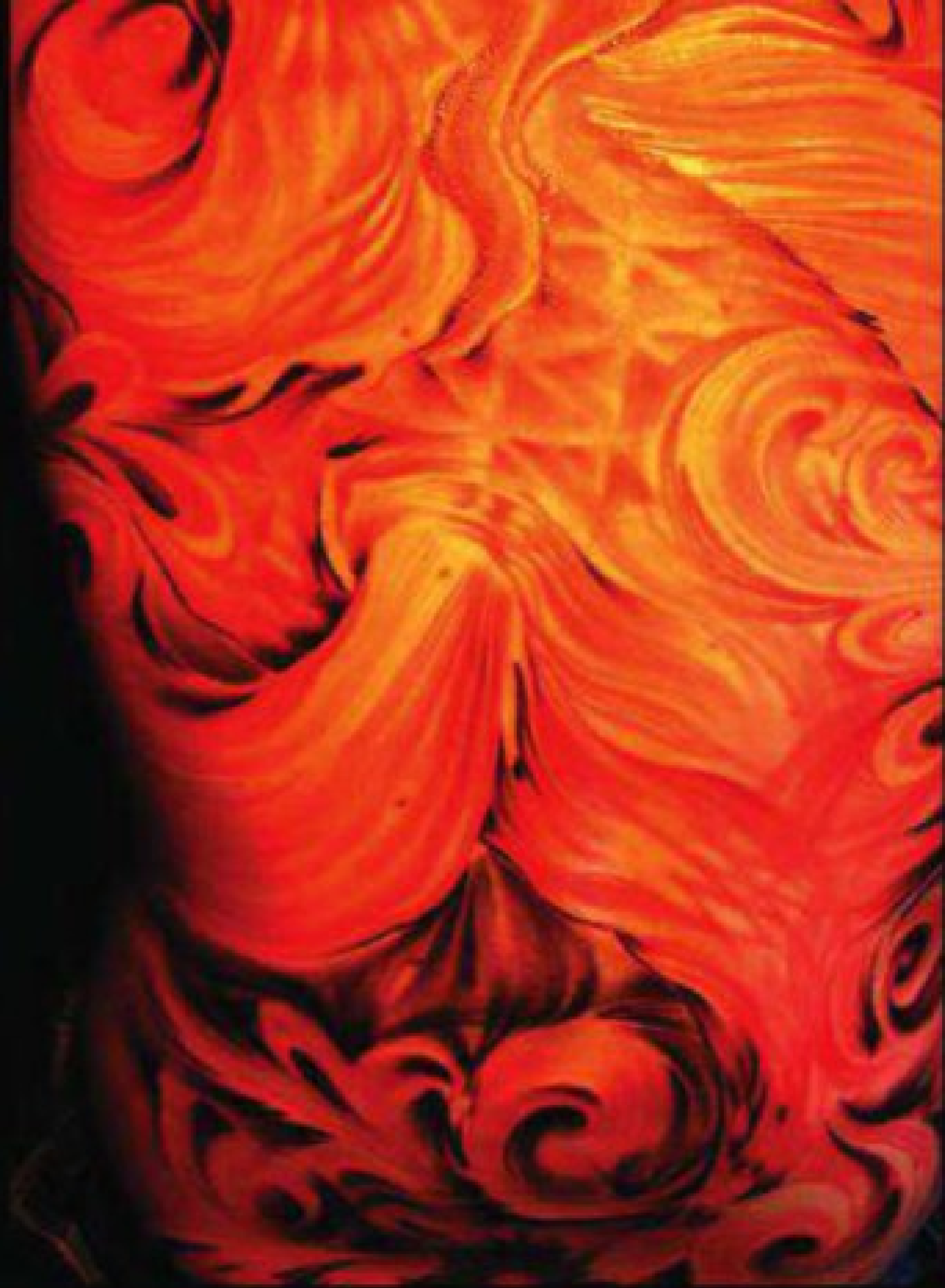


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SKELETON KEY IN THE KEYSTONE STATE

T a t t o o i s t

Todd Williams

By Amanda Stephan

Central Pennsylvania is a travel writer's dream. The area boasts a dense patchwork of diverse tourist attractions that few places can match. Famous, pivotal Civil War battle sites rub geographic elbows with the homesteads of colorful Amish farmers. The Hershey Highway carries travelers to the quaint, industrious town that chocolate built. The area boasts some of the biggest and most prestigious annual automobile swap meets in the world. And, of course, there's tattooing.

Harrisburg's Todd Williams has cultivated an approach to tattooing that relies on heavy linework with what he describes as an organic flow. "I also try and stay with the same basic color aesthetic," he said, "bright colors contrasted with muted duller tones. I'm stoked I have been able to come into my own as far as developing my own sort of recognizable style."

To hone his artistic talents, Williams does a great deal of drawing with pens and pencils. He's explored other mediums like charcoal, acrylic, and watercolors, but he always returns to his comfort zone. Trial and error has been his lifelong mentor. "I took some drawing and graphic design classes in college briefly," he said, "but school just wasn't for me. I tried to take as many art classes as I could so I could get out of having to write papers and stuff like that."

Williams has an appreciation for any tattoo style that shows a clear sense of art and originality. "I love so many different artists, and styles of art. Taylor Cort, Derek Noble, Ryan Spahr, Nick Baxter, Cool-Aid, and Nick Malasto are just a small list. They all have different attributes to their tattooing that makes their style or interpretation of a style unique," he said.

Todd Williams

Story by Todd Williams

Williams' attributes have earned him admirers as well. Especially his parents.

"If my parents had shirts that said, 'Proud Parent of #1 Tattoo Artist Todd Williams,' they'd totally wear them," he said. "Anywhere I go with my mom she says, 'I'm his mom!' and my dad needs to show everyone the cross I did on his arm when I was about a year into tattooing. My friends are equally as supportive in their own ways."

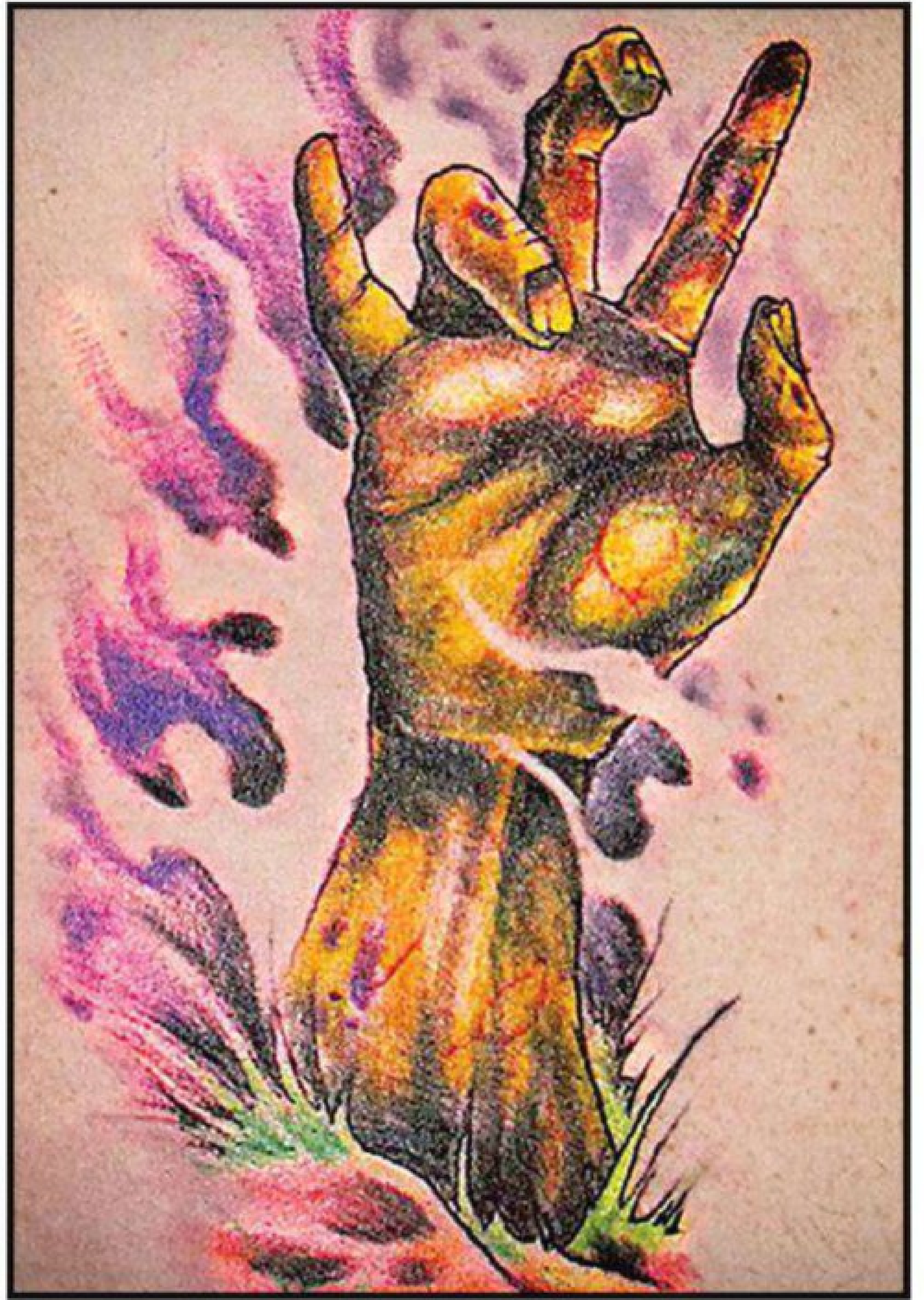
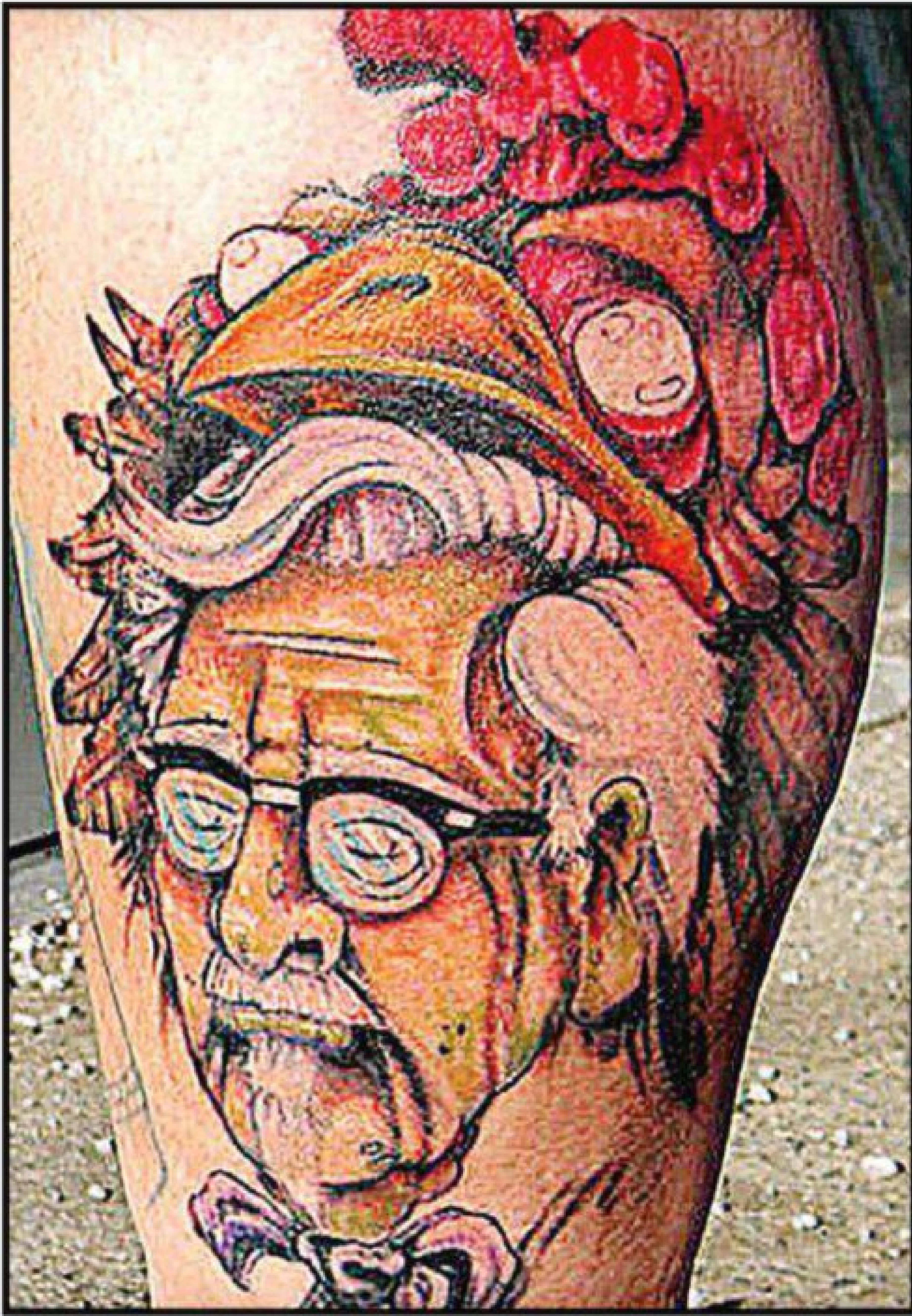
When Williams was growing up in central Pennsylvania, the general attitude toward tattooing was far less congenial. Williams found himself surrounded by a crowd that was primarily conservative and non-tattooed. Williams, a huge basketball fan, had to glean what he could about tattooing from his basketball heroes. Like many others, Williams was fascinated by Chicago Bulls flashy Dennis Rodman. But for Williams, the fascination was Rodman's collection of tattoos. Apparently, the insight into tattooing that basketball provided was enough of a hook. While still in high school, Williams decided that he wanted to be a tattoo artist. "Some kids were trying to get into college," he said. "I was trying to build a small portfolio of artwork so I could try to get an apprenticeship."

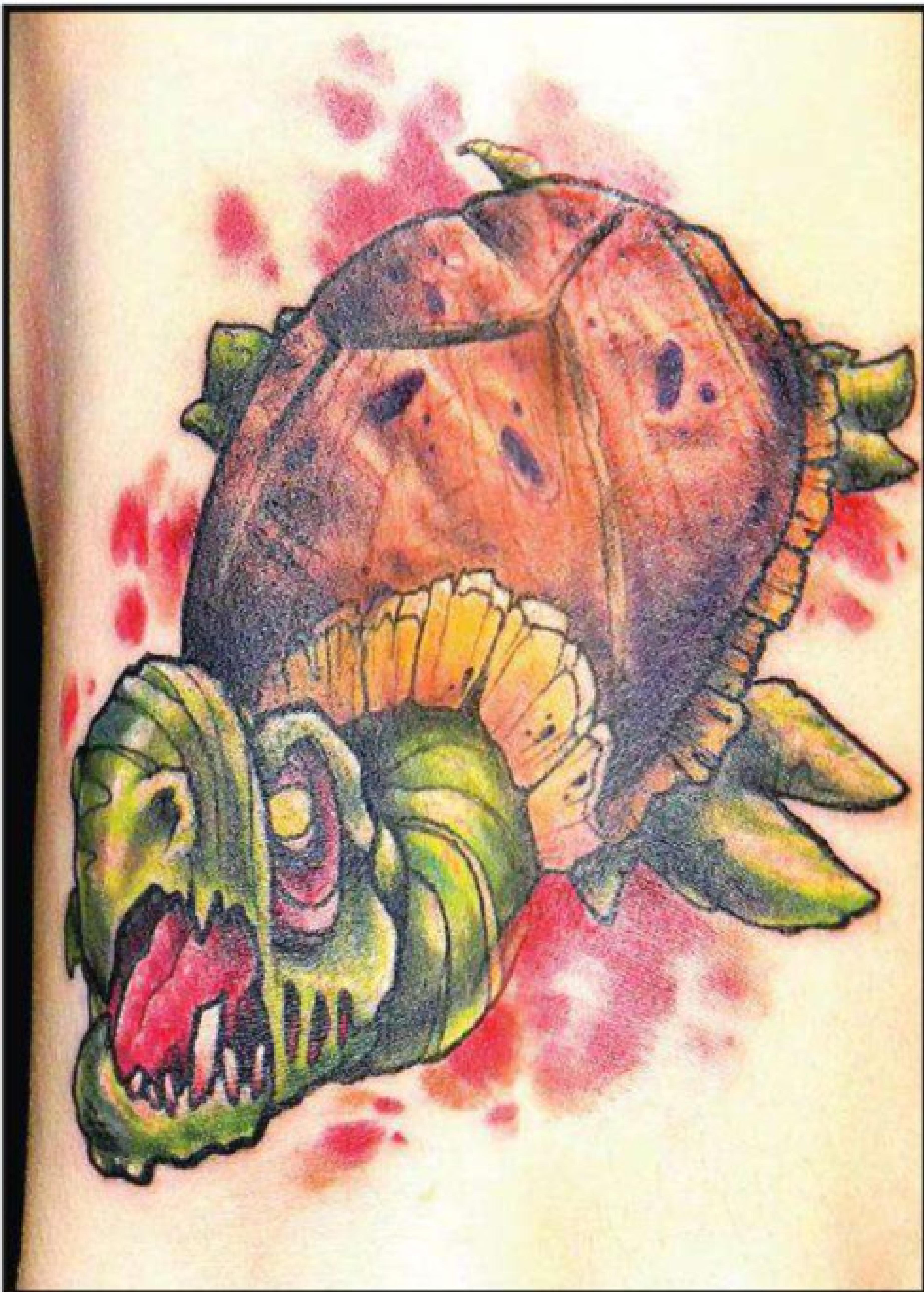
With little true knowledge of professional tattooing, Williams wasn't entirely confident that he would be able to make his dreams a reality. His parents were even more skeptical. Was this really the 'right' direction for their son? However, six years later Williams is proving his skill. He brings his art to life at Never Say Die Tattoo in Harrisburg and wherever else he can work a convention or guest spot. "I'm adding more conventions every year," he said. "Baltimore and Philly have been good to me. As the opportunity for guest spots are starting to open up, I'm always down for an adventure."

To keep track of where Todd Williams goes, head to www.TattooingByToddWilliams.com.

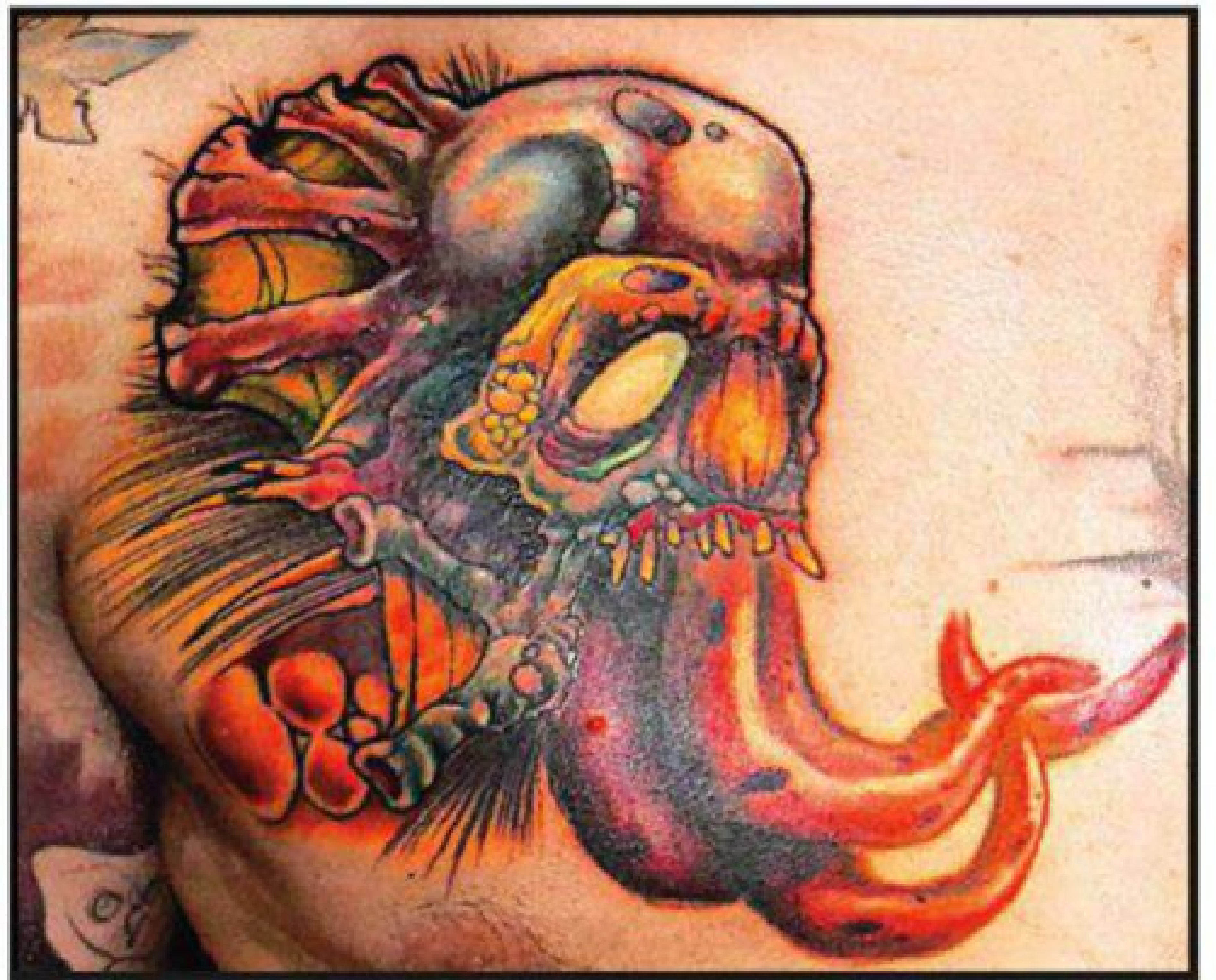
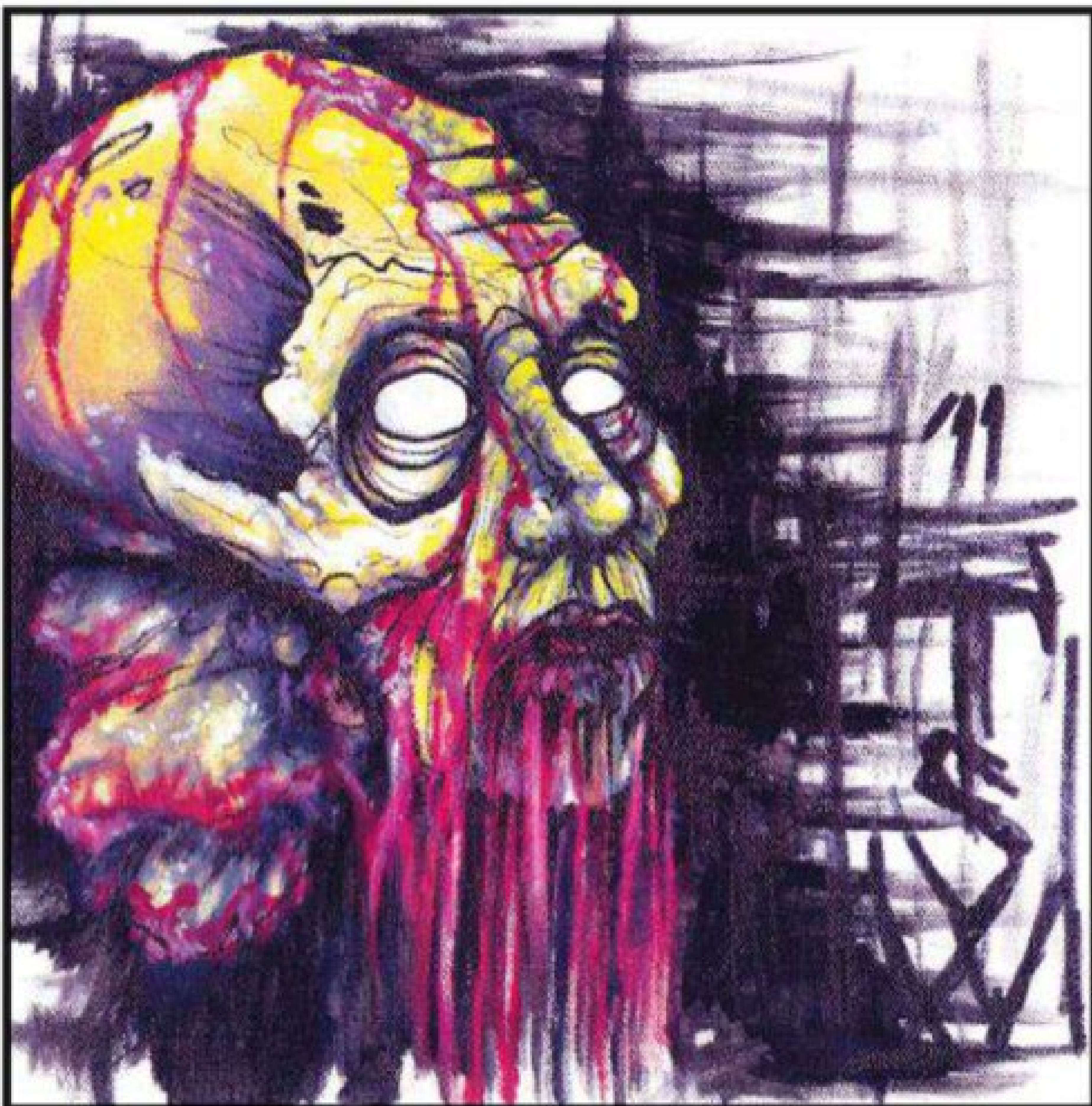
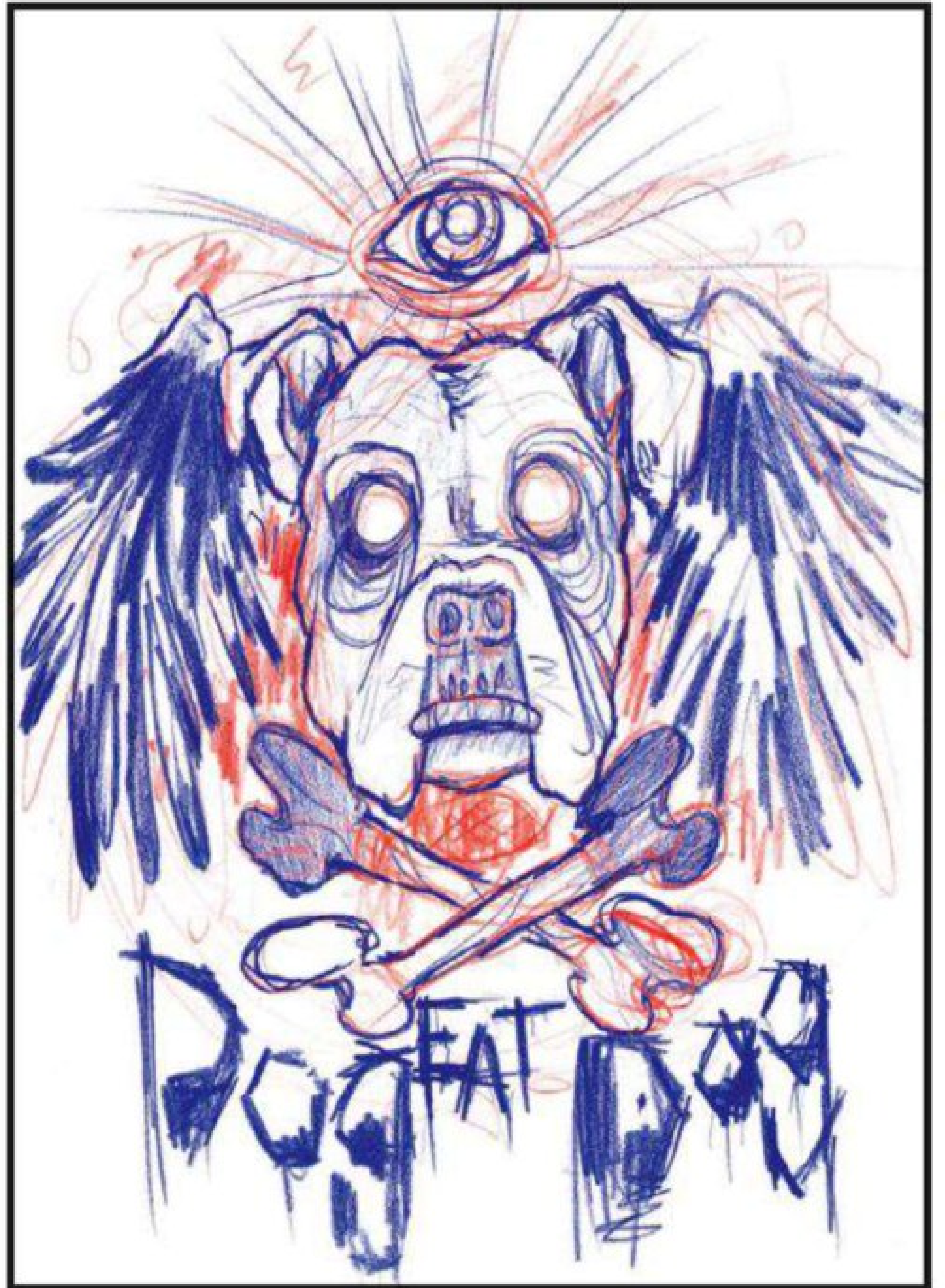


Todd Williams











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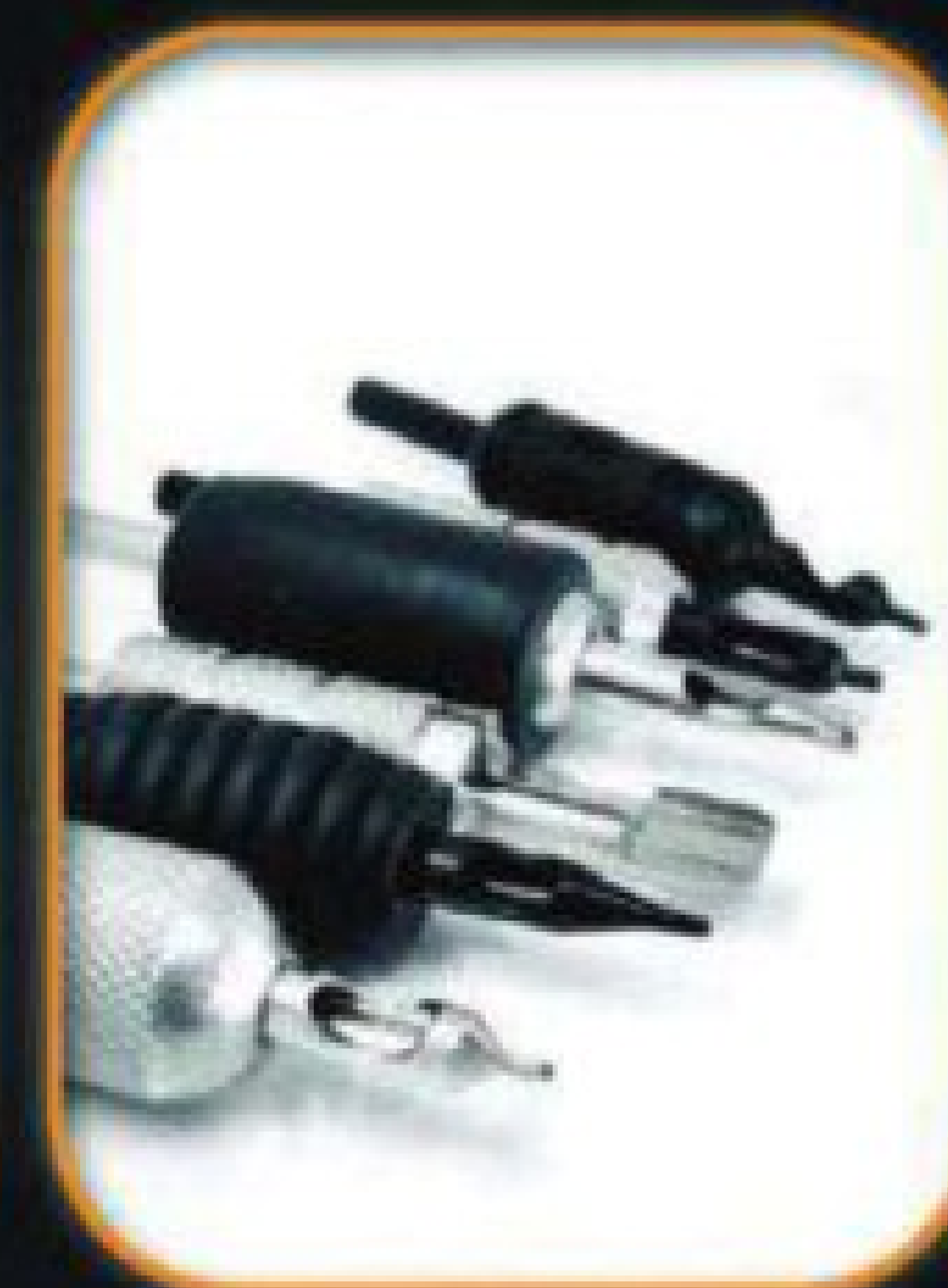
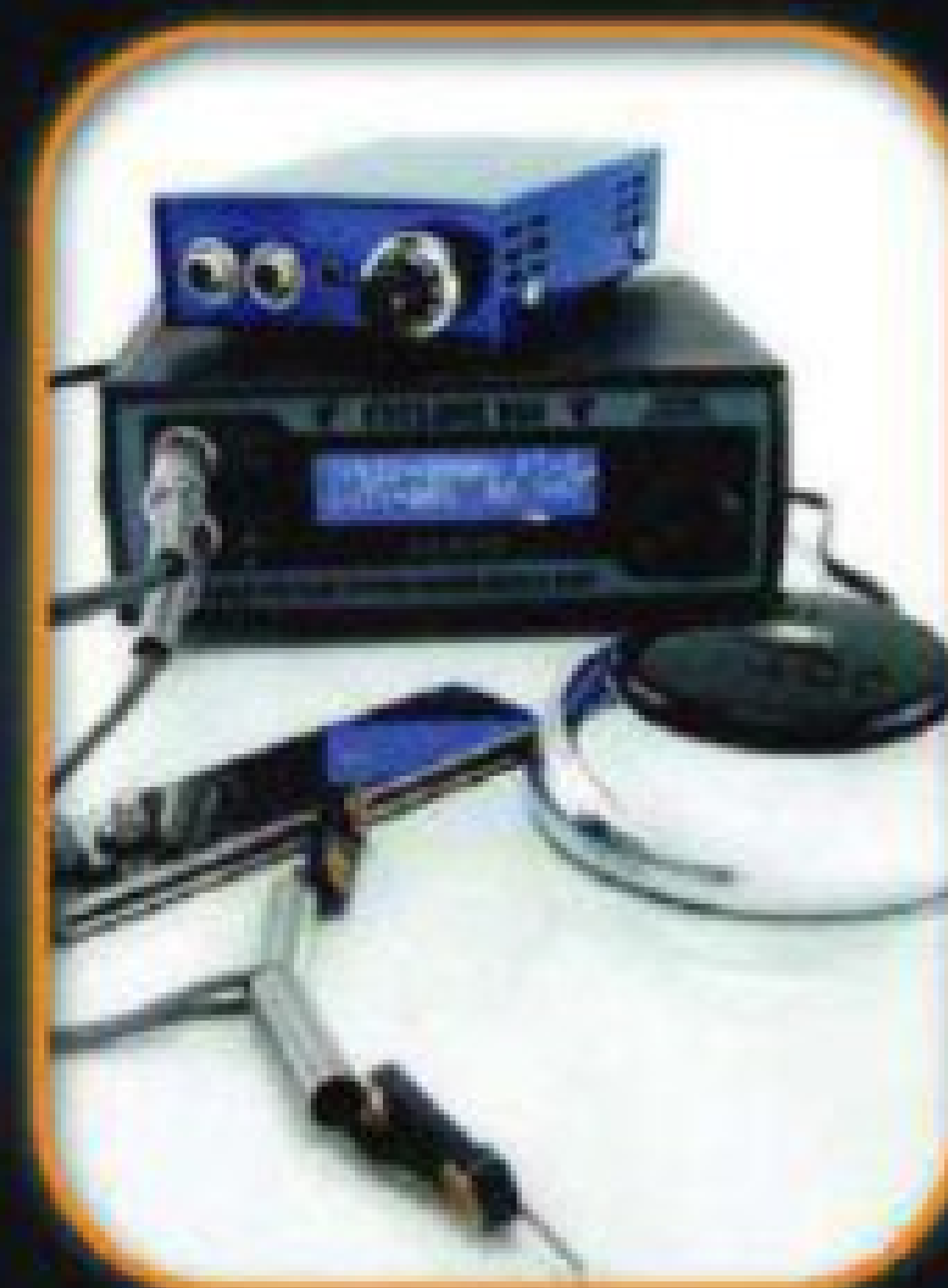


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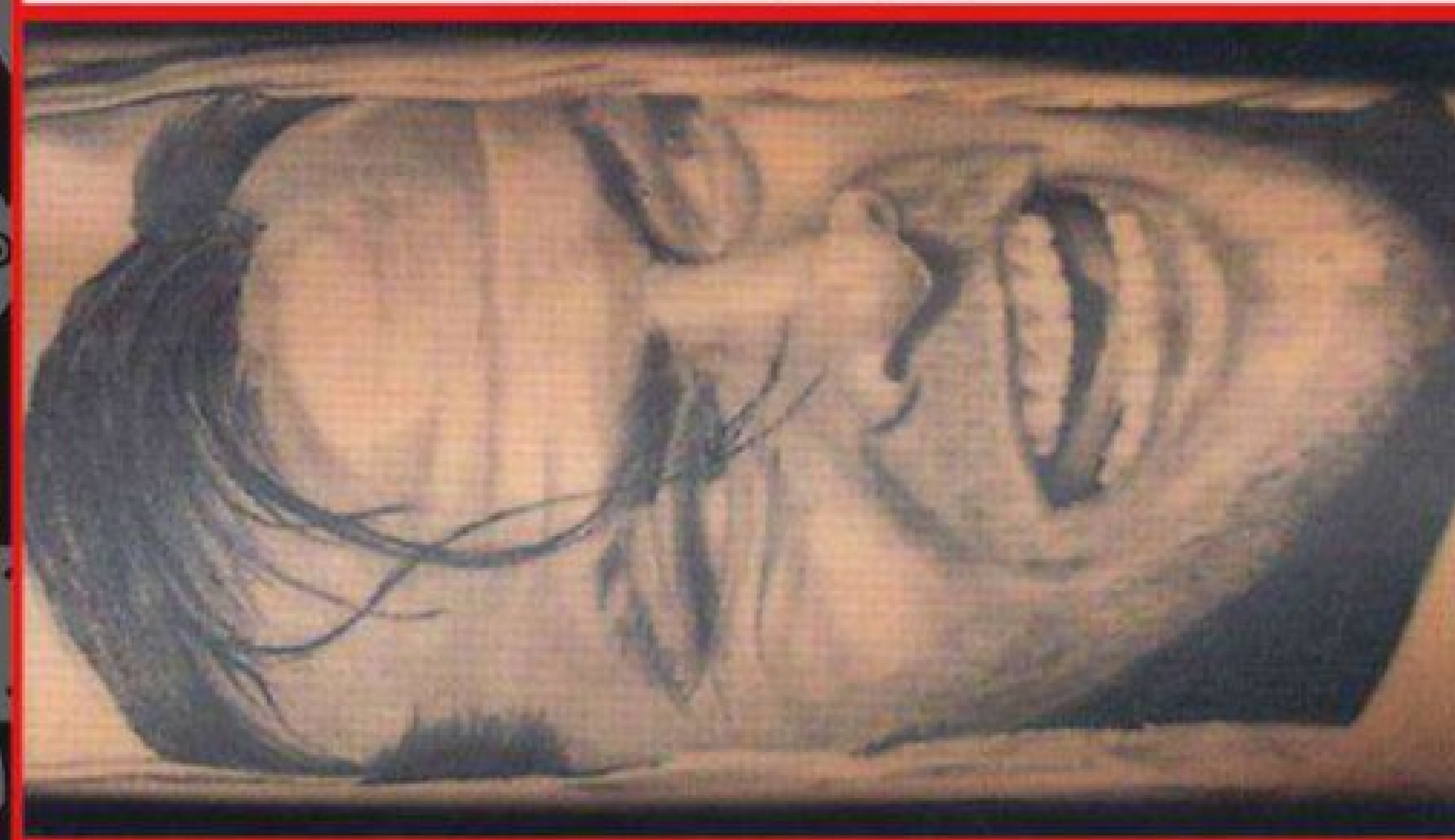


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That Tattoo Guy

TYE HARRIS

By Amanda Stephan

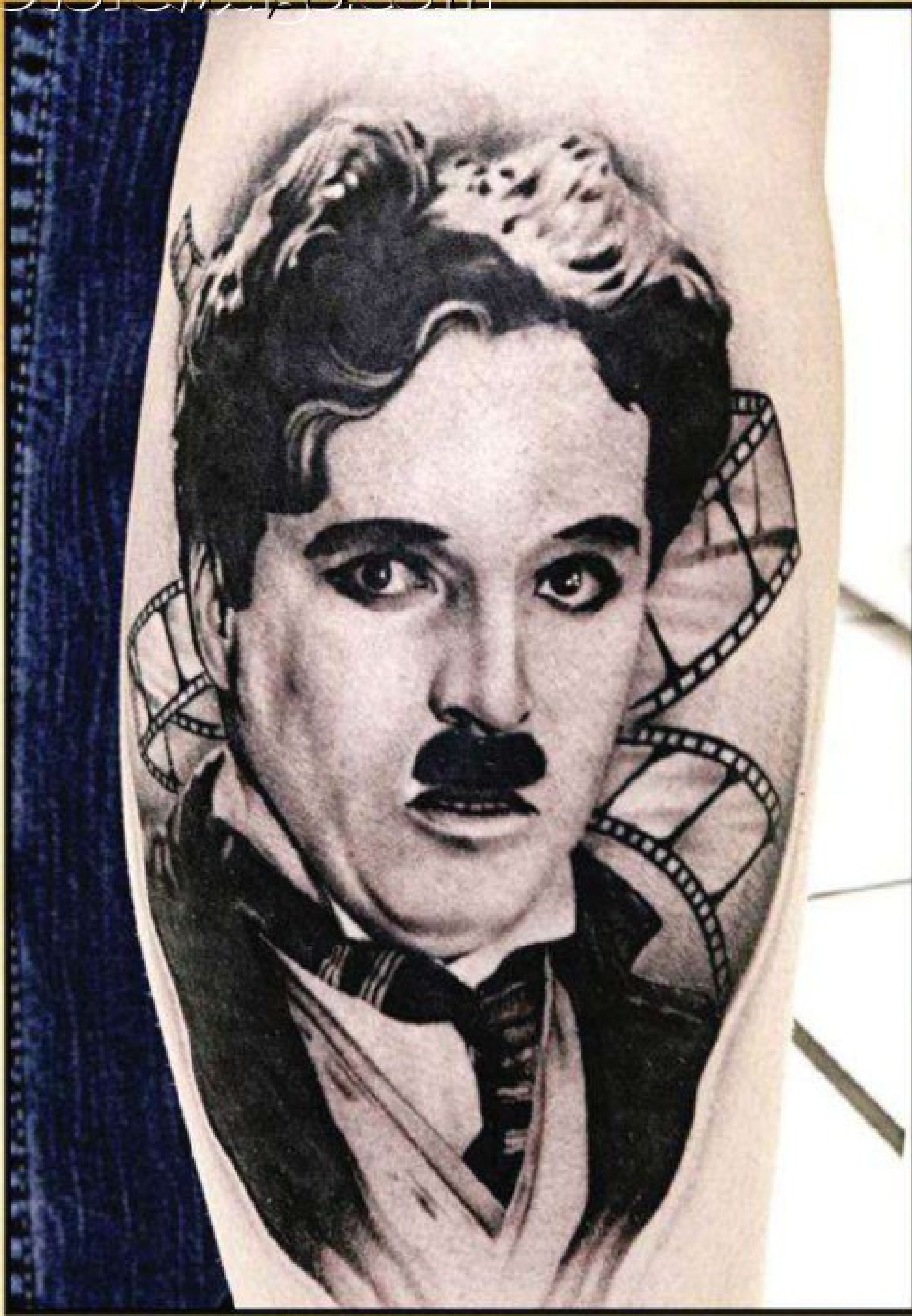
The past year has been a rewarding one for tattoo artist Tye Harris. He has won 25 awards over the course of the year, his fifth as a working tattoo artist. However, it's the first award that Harris ever won that still holds the greatest weight for the young artist. His first award was made particularly special by the fact that the contest was judged by Jack Rudy, one of his heroes.

Rudy was an innovator of black and grey tattooing, and Harris can't get enough of black and grey. Especially portraits. "That's my favorite style for sure," he said. "Any kind of realism always gets me all excited. I love me some skulls and roses, too. I think I'm still developing a style and theme—I'd like to lean more towards horror stuff in the future."

For many of the same reasons that Harris admires Jack Rudy, he places Bob Tyrrell on a similar pedestal. "Bob Tyrrell is definitely my biggest inspiration," Harris said. "He blows my mind every time I look at his stuff. I love his heavy blacks and the depth he captures. His attention to detail is pretty sick as well. He's the man."

Along with Tyrrell, Harris gets inspiration from his friend and fellow tattooer Jorge A. Gwooki. "He always continues to push me," Harris said, "and is really the one who opened my eyes to realism and light source." Other favorites include Tim Hendricks, Tommy Lee, Josh Duffy, Tommy Montoya, Jose Lopez, Fernie Andrade, and Robert Hernandez.

Harris had his first real brush with the skin arts as a small boy. "When my big brother came home with his son's name on his arm, I was like eleven and I thought he had ruined his body," Harris said. "I was pretty upset about it." However, his attitude toward tattooing quickly changed. Eight years after that initial awkward introduction, Harris was equipped to



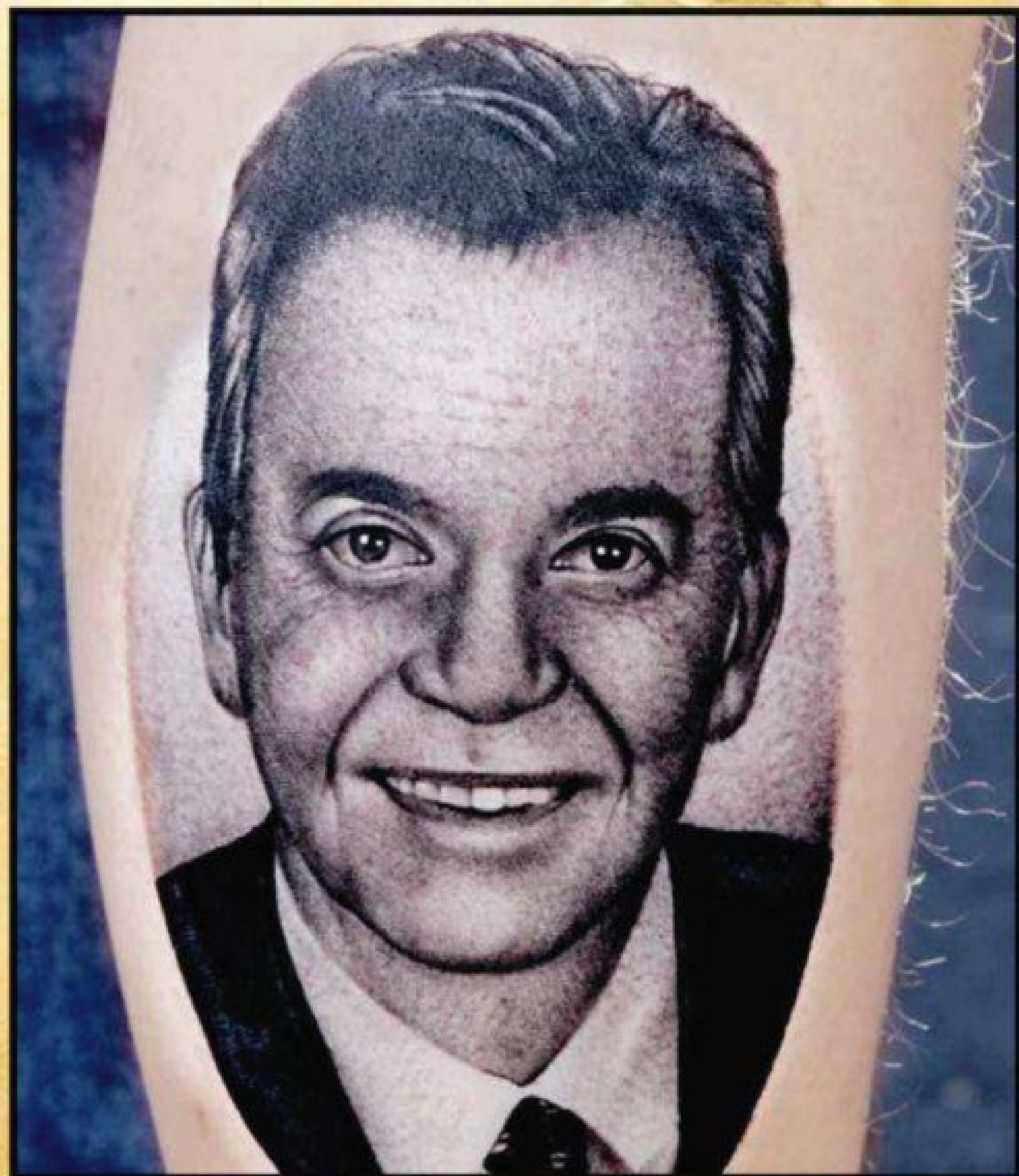
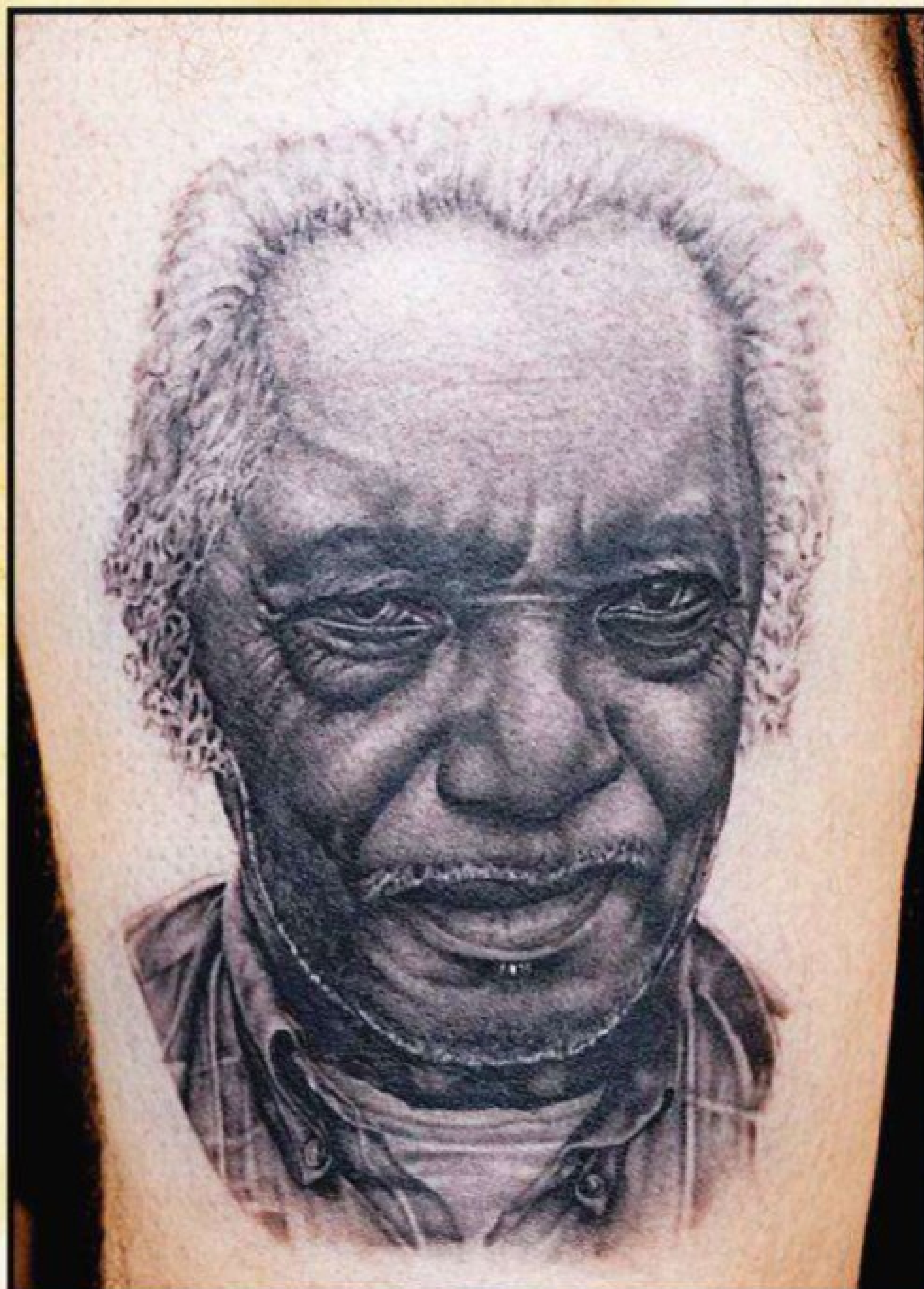
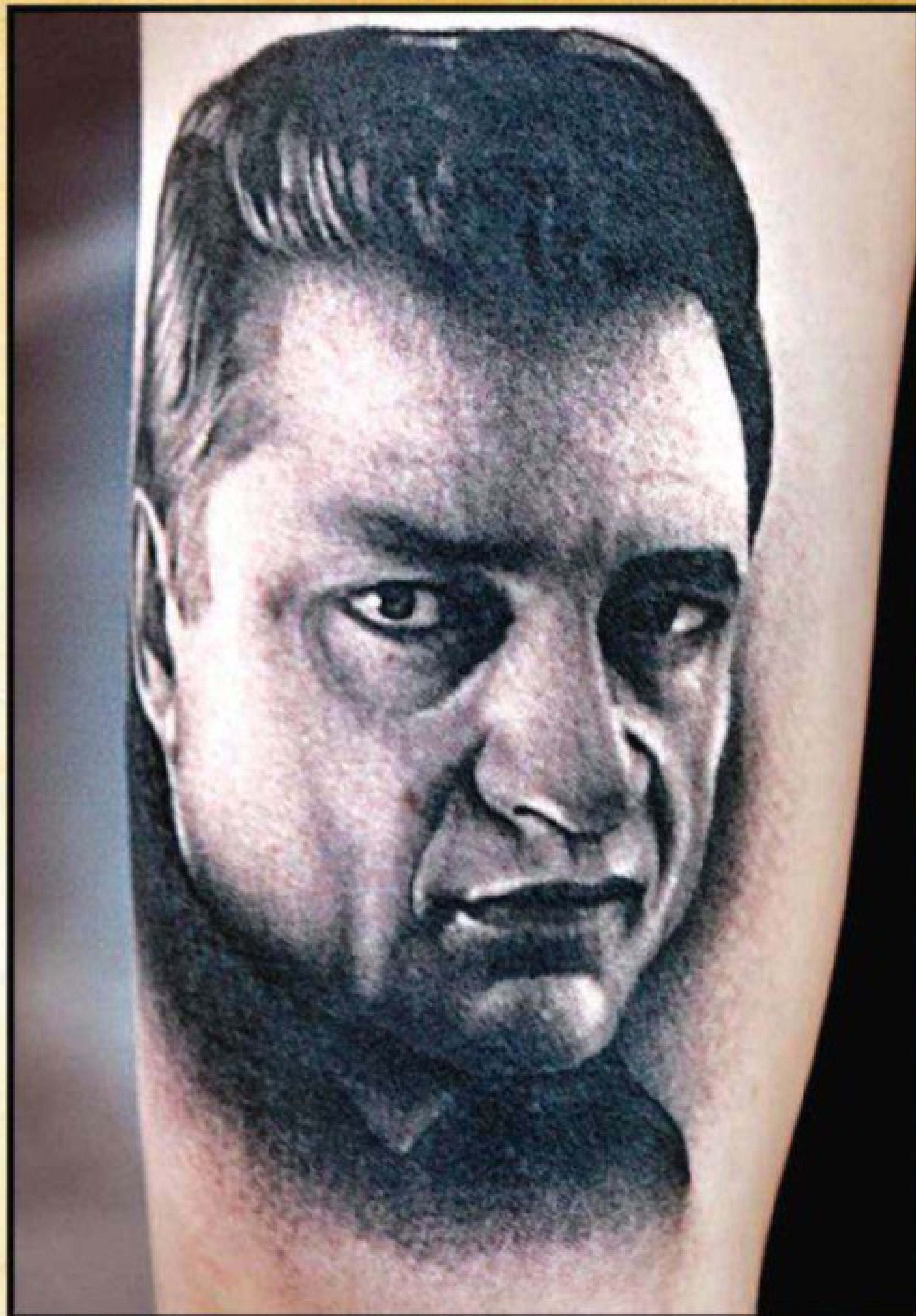
tye HARRIS

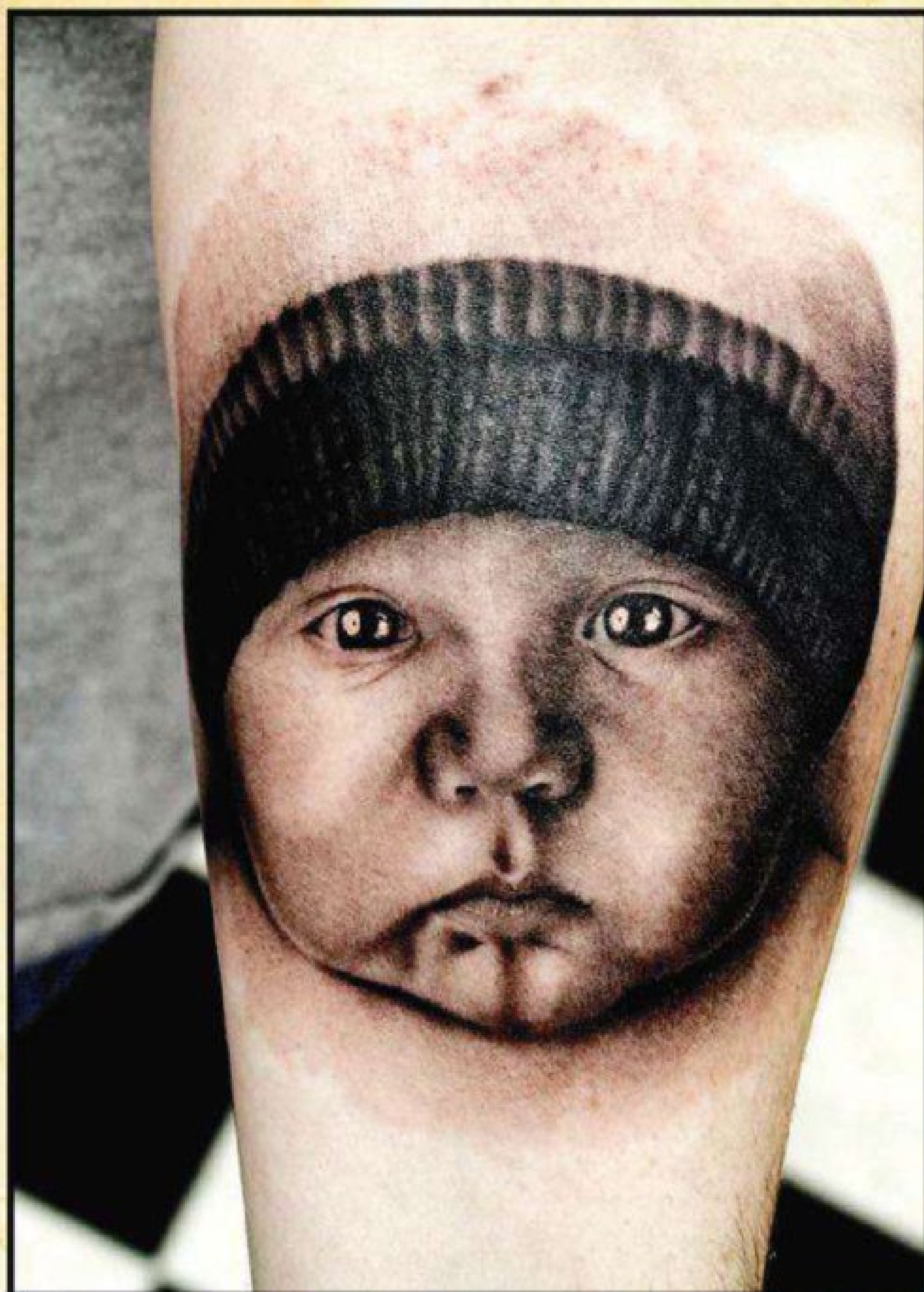
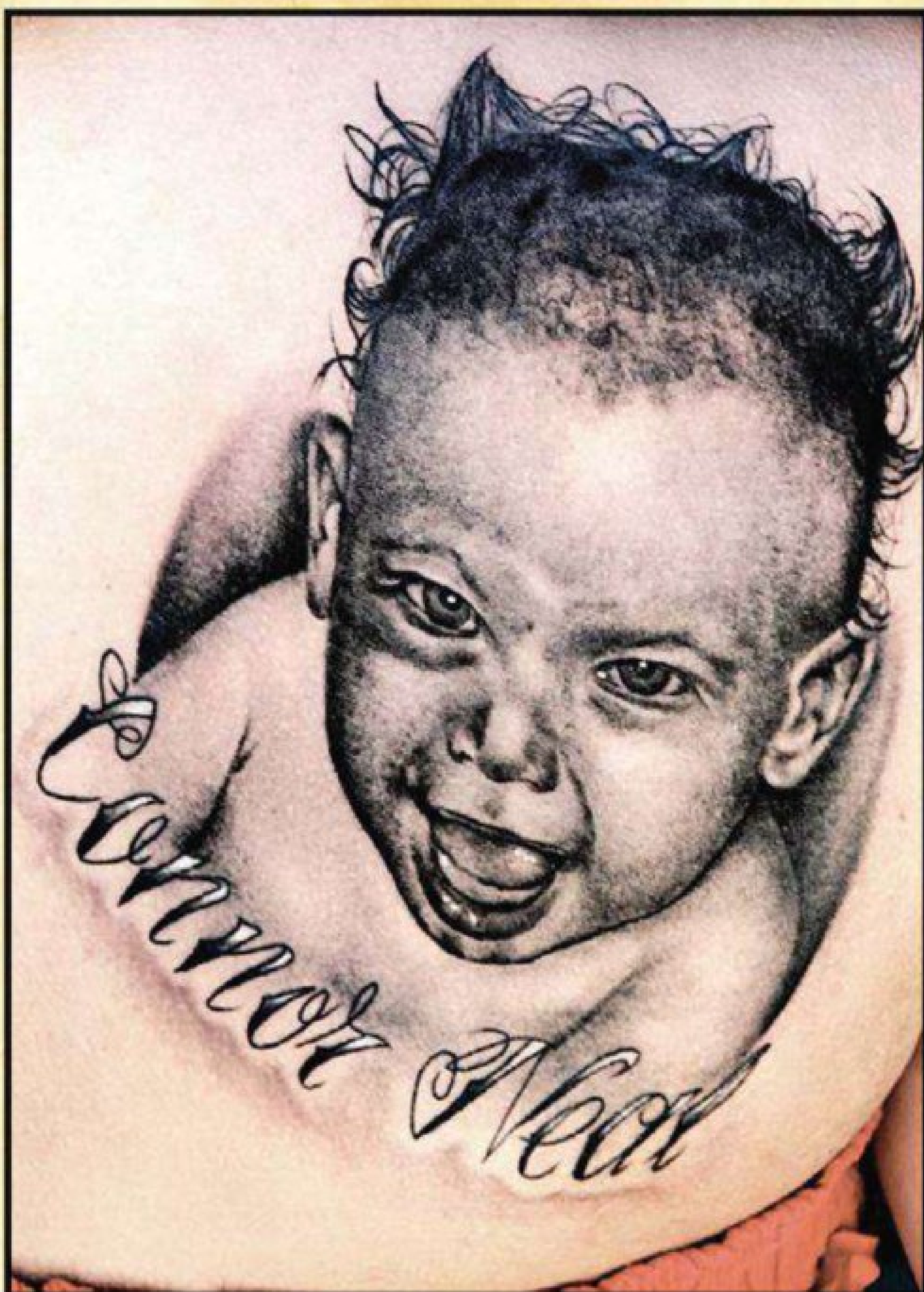
tattoo himself and anyone else who he could get his hands on. One year later, at age 20, Harris moved from Odessa to San Antonio, and began tattooing at a street shop.

After a few years of paying dues at the street shop, Harris moved on to San Marcos, Texas. There he truly felt his artistic spirit begin to stir. Of San Marcos, Harris said, "I worked there for about two years and then started to do a lot of conventions and just traveled for a few months. By the time this comes out there's really no telling where I'll be. I know I'll be out in Lancaster, California quite a bit this year at Electric Soul Tattoo, and I'll be working conventions all over the U.S. Other than that, when I'm in Texas, I'm usually in Houston at Texas Body Art."

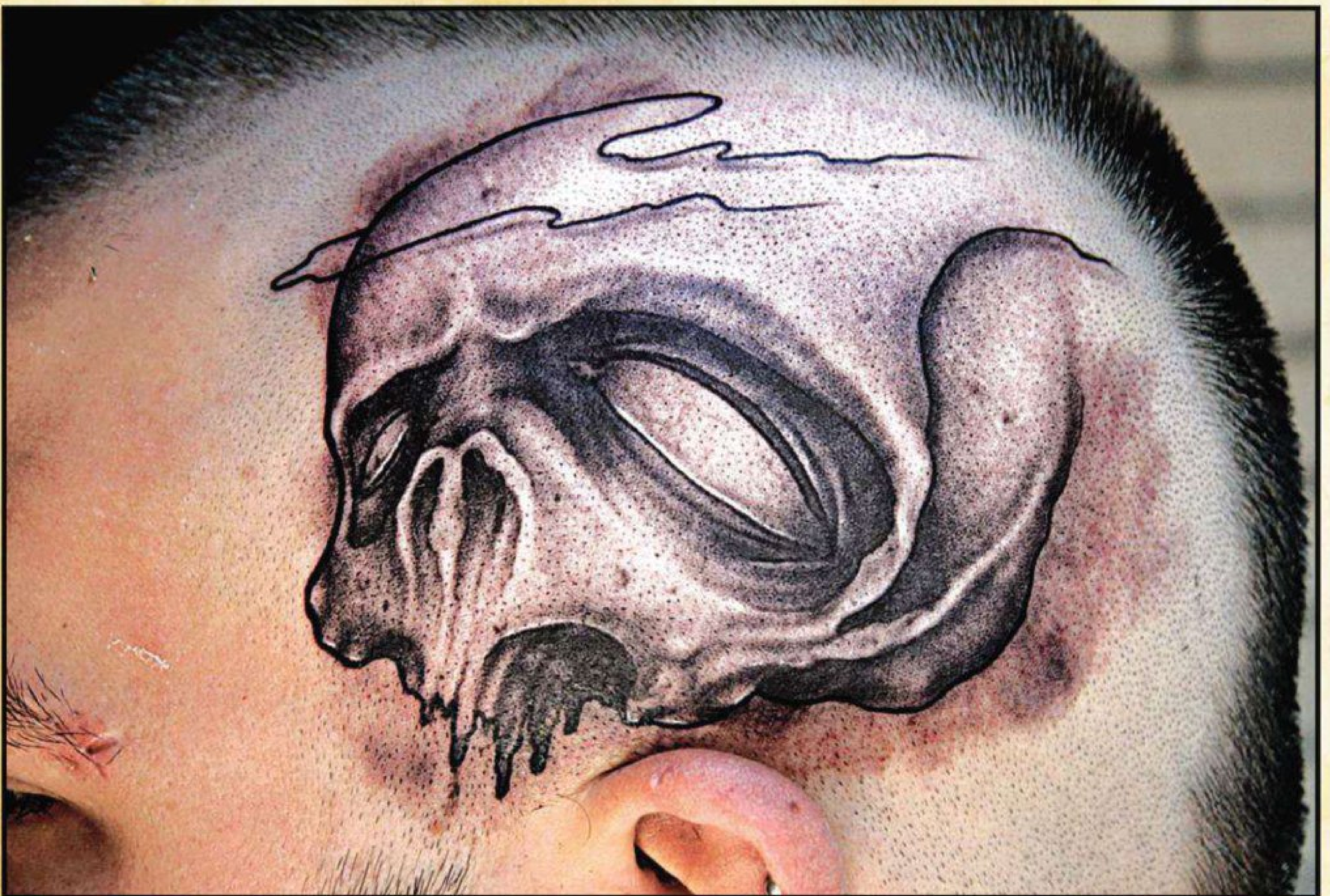
Though the ability to create art and earn a living off of it is surely Tye Harris' greatest incentive for being a tattoo artist, the opportunity to see the world is a close second. "I love what I do," he said. "The freedom to travel, all the people I get to meet. It's the best job in the world. I would love to open a shop someday in the near future. I just have such a hard time staying in one place for too long. I like to bounce around."

To find out where Tye Harris lands, e-mail him at tyethetattoo guy@yahoo.com or look at him on Facebook.

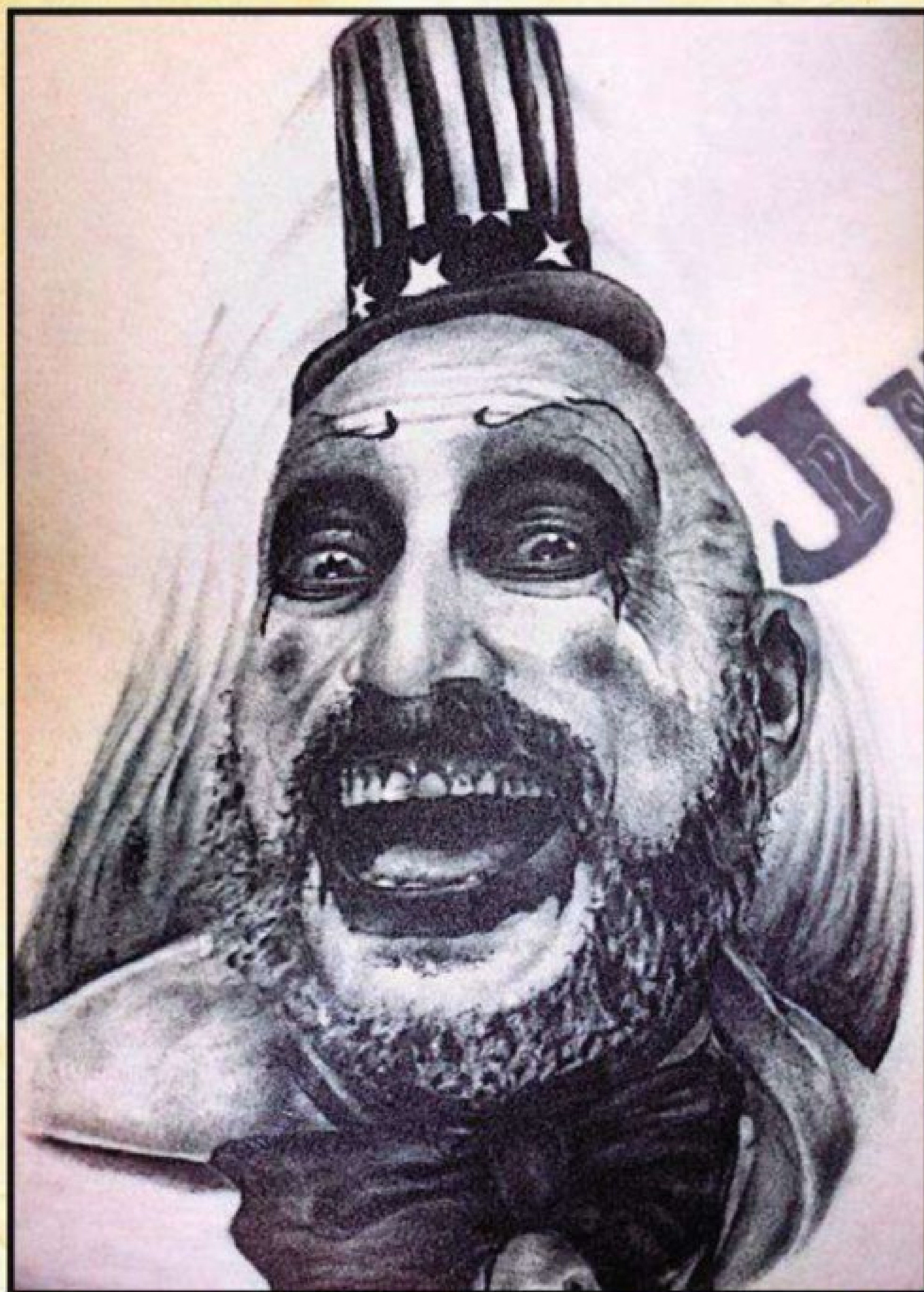
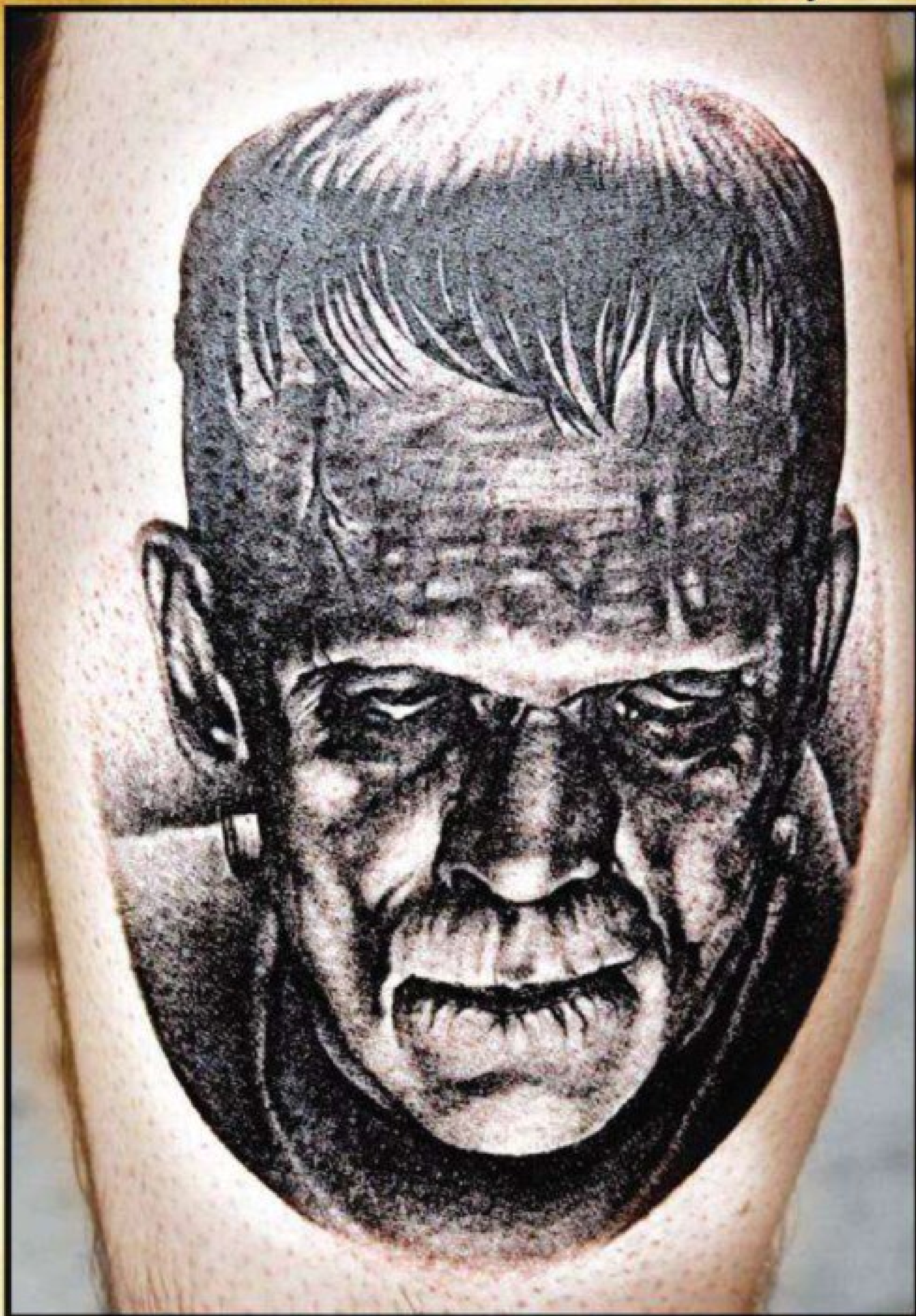


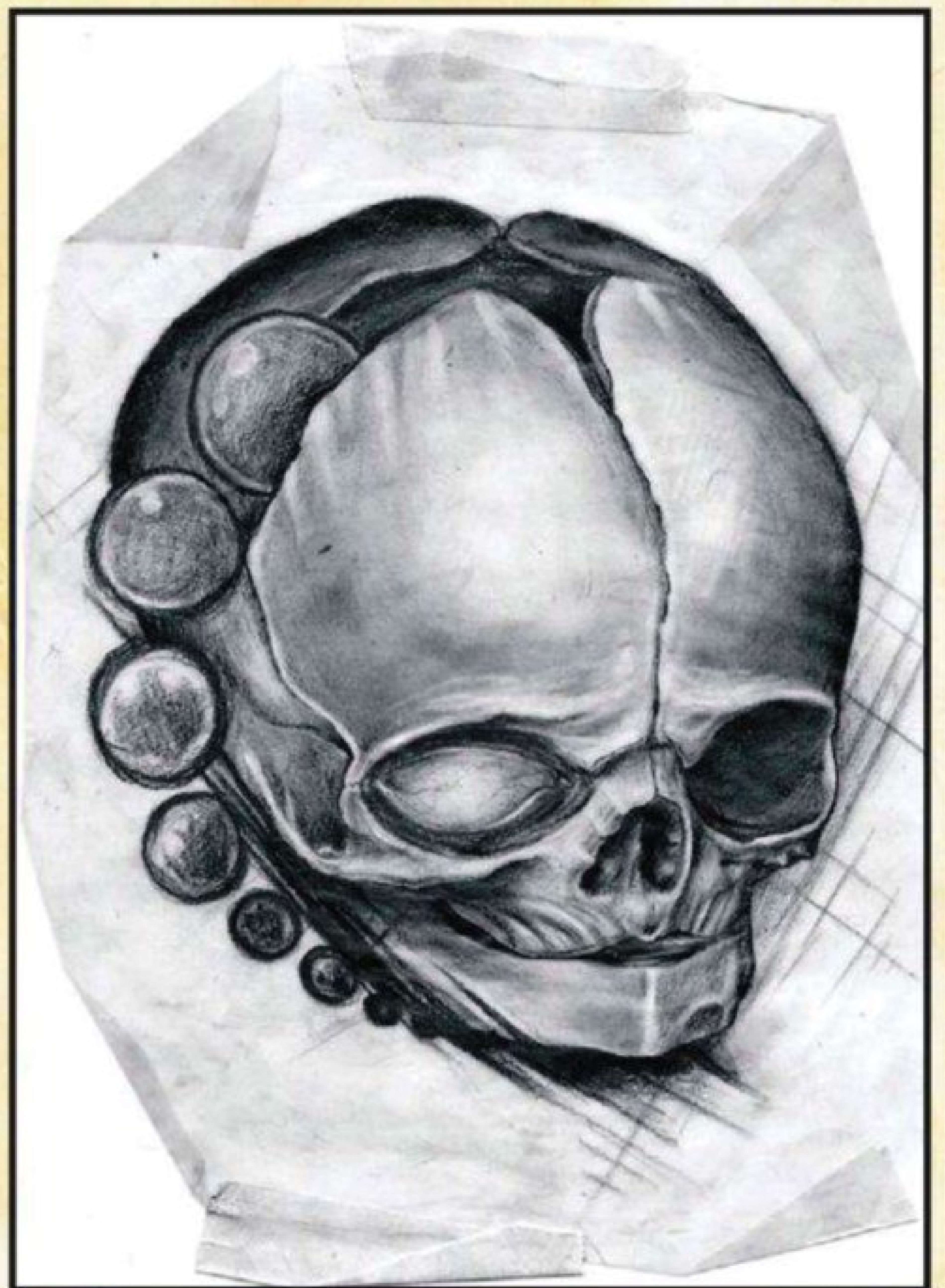
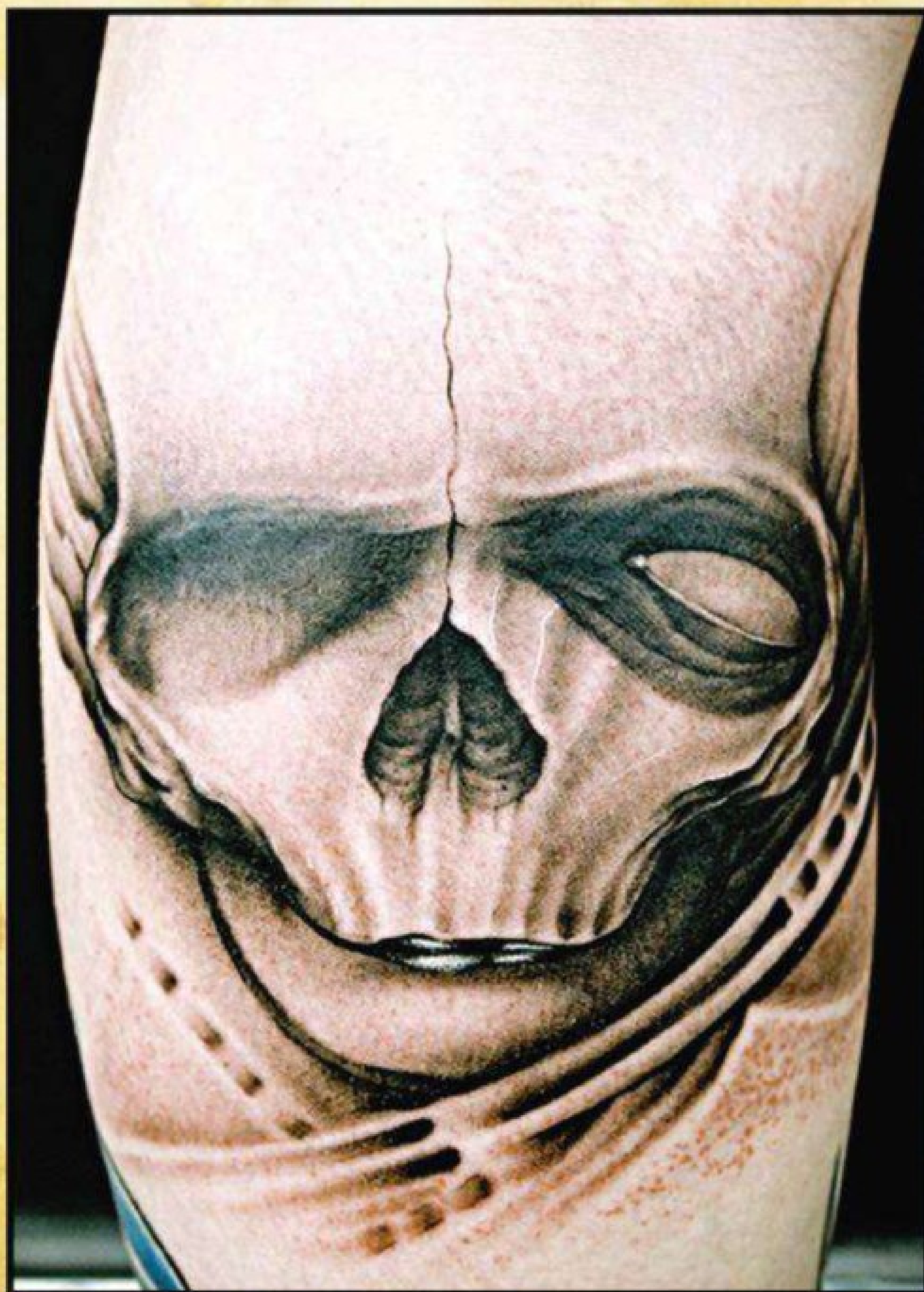


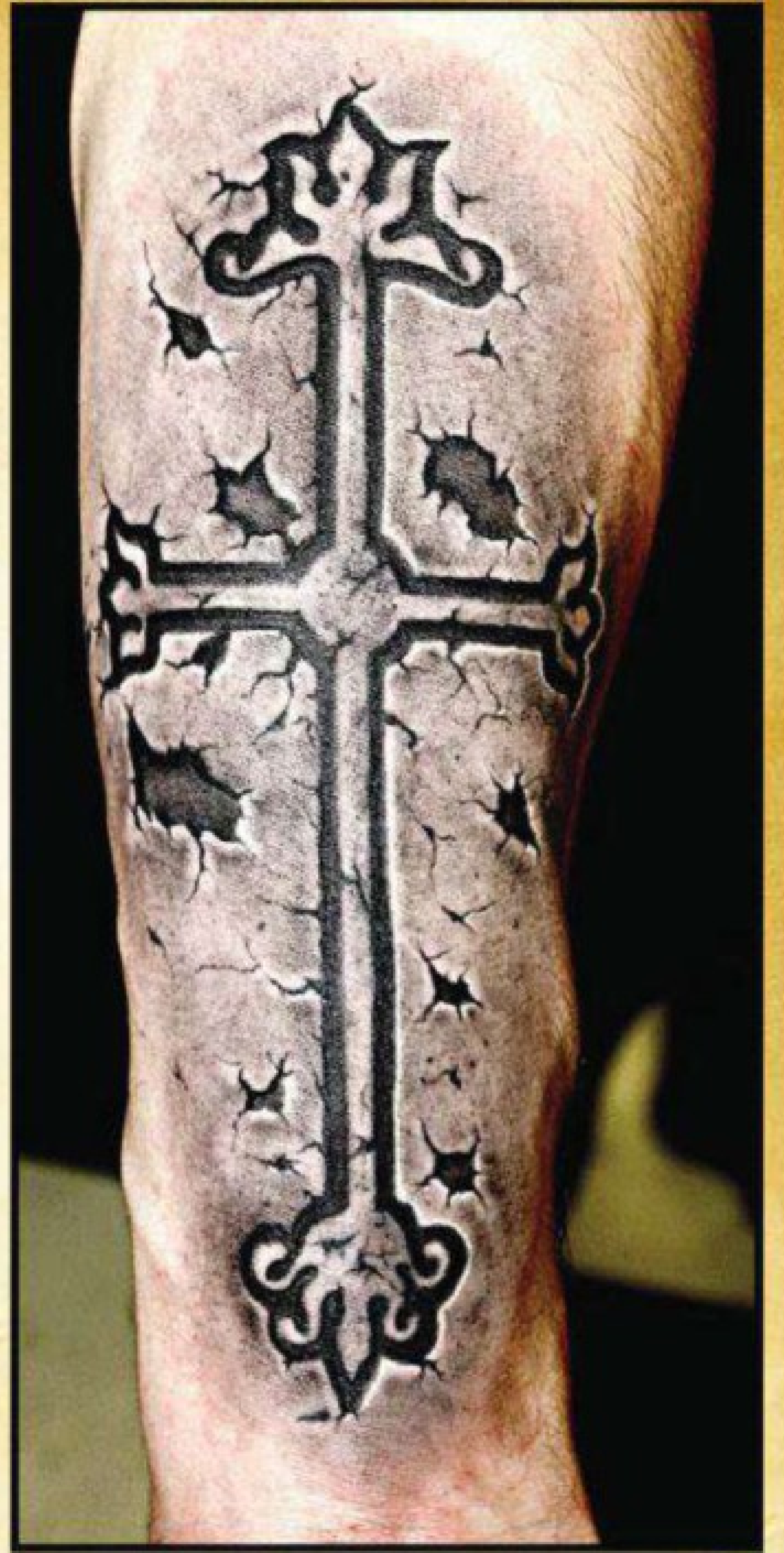
tye HARRIS



tye HARRIS







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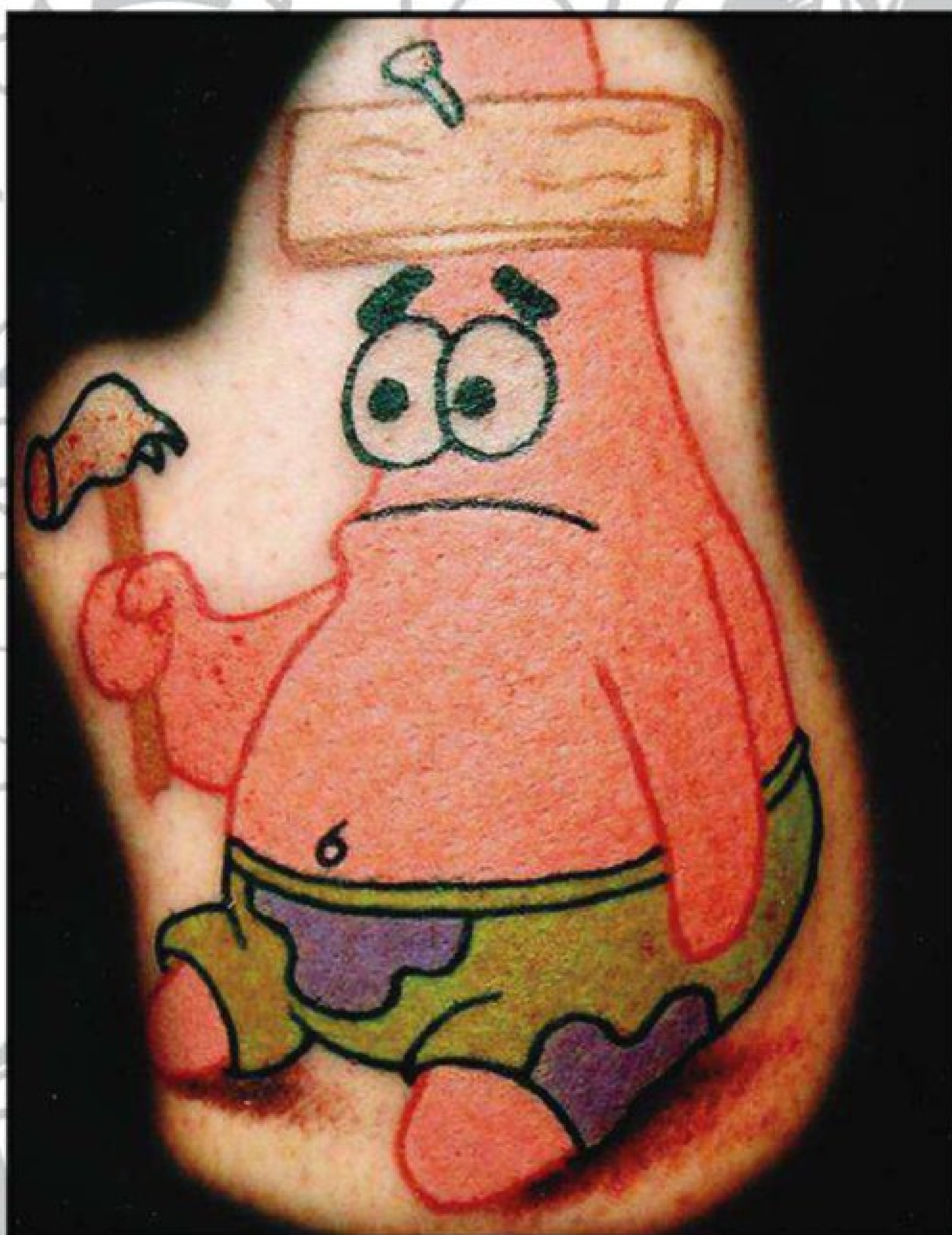
Dawn Purnell, Four Star Tattoo
Santa Fe, NM



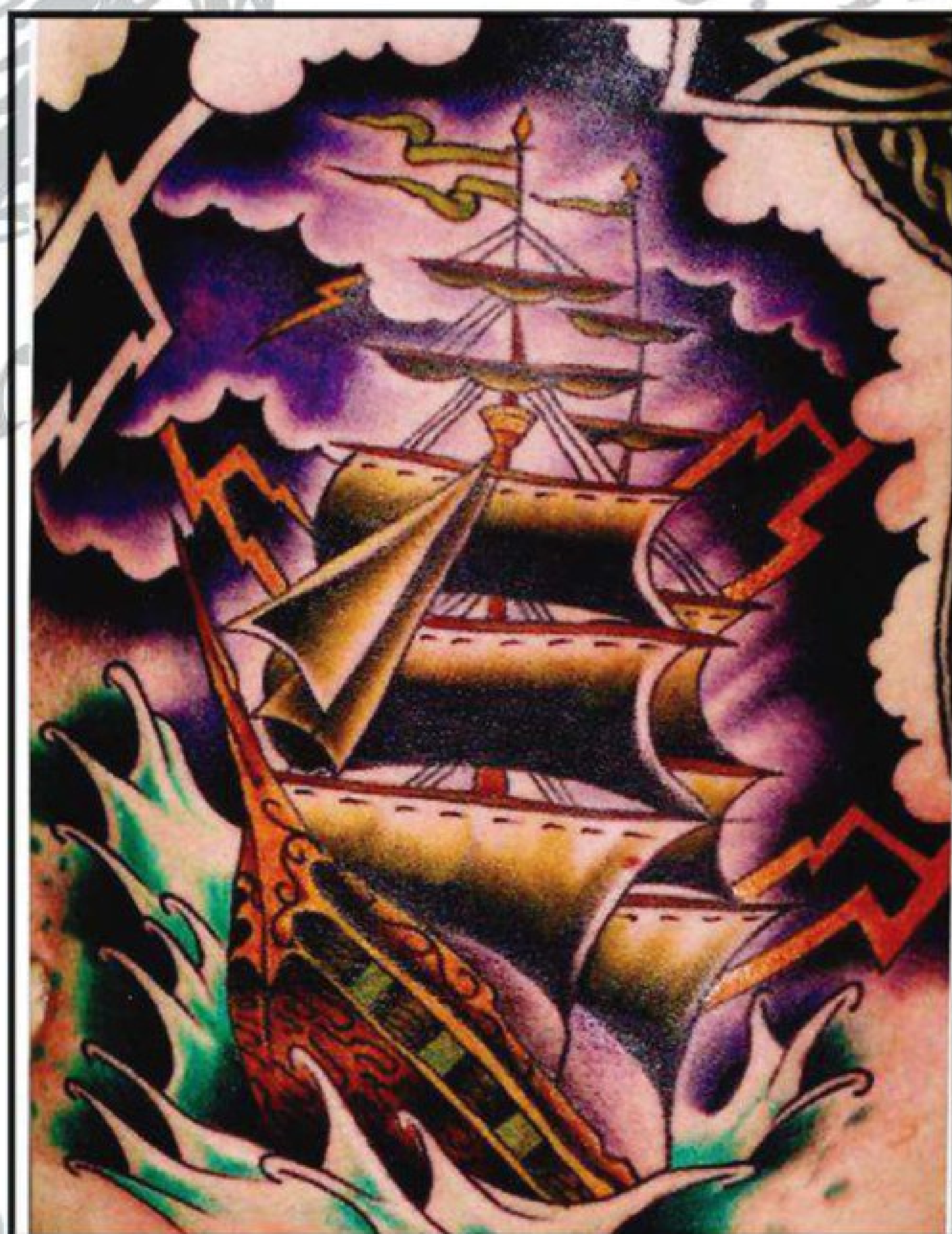
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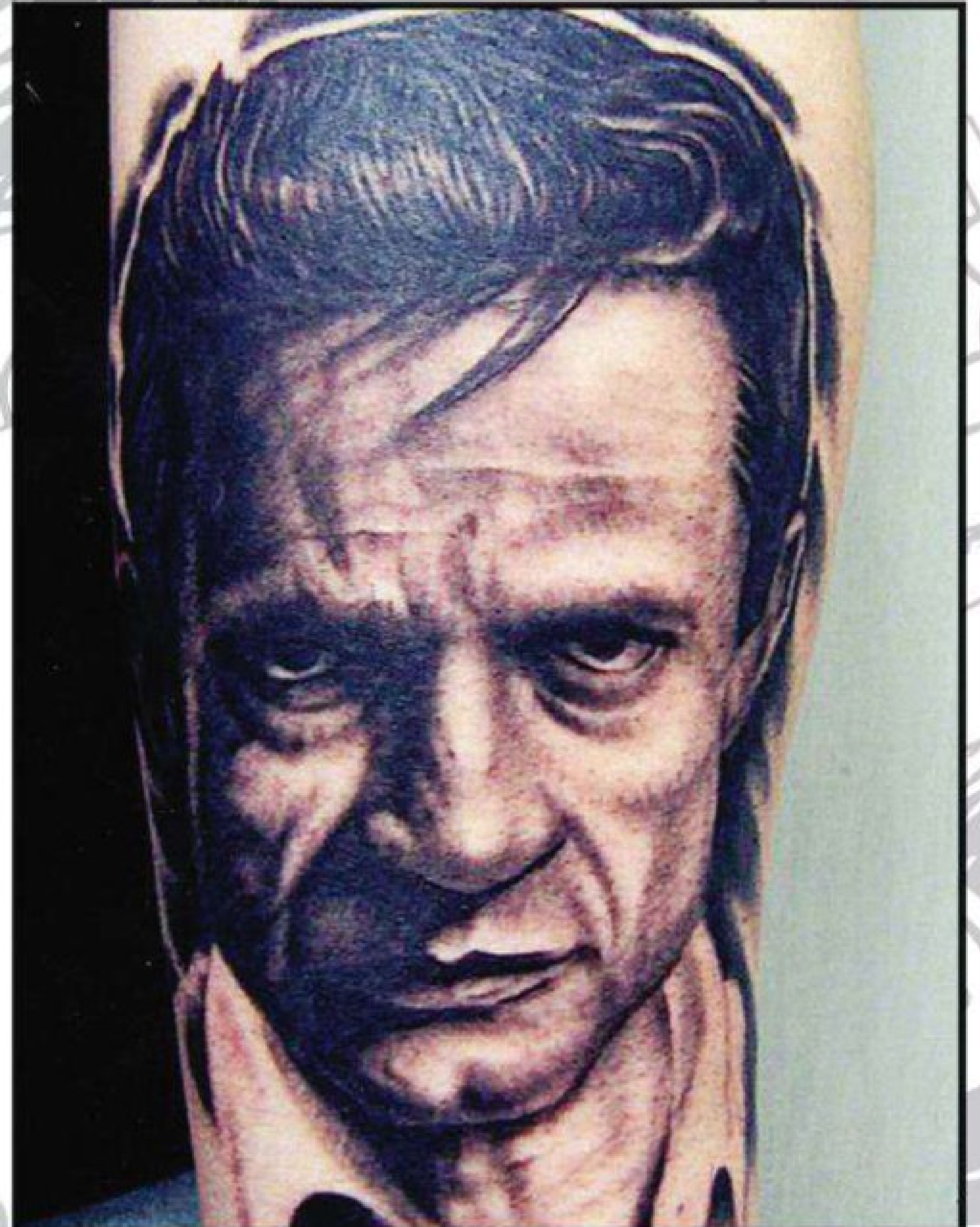
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Chris Depinto, Shotsie's Tattoo
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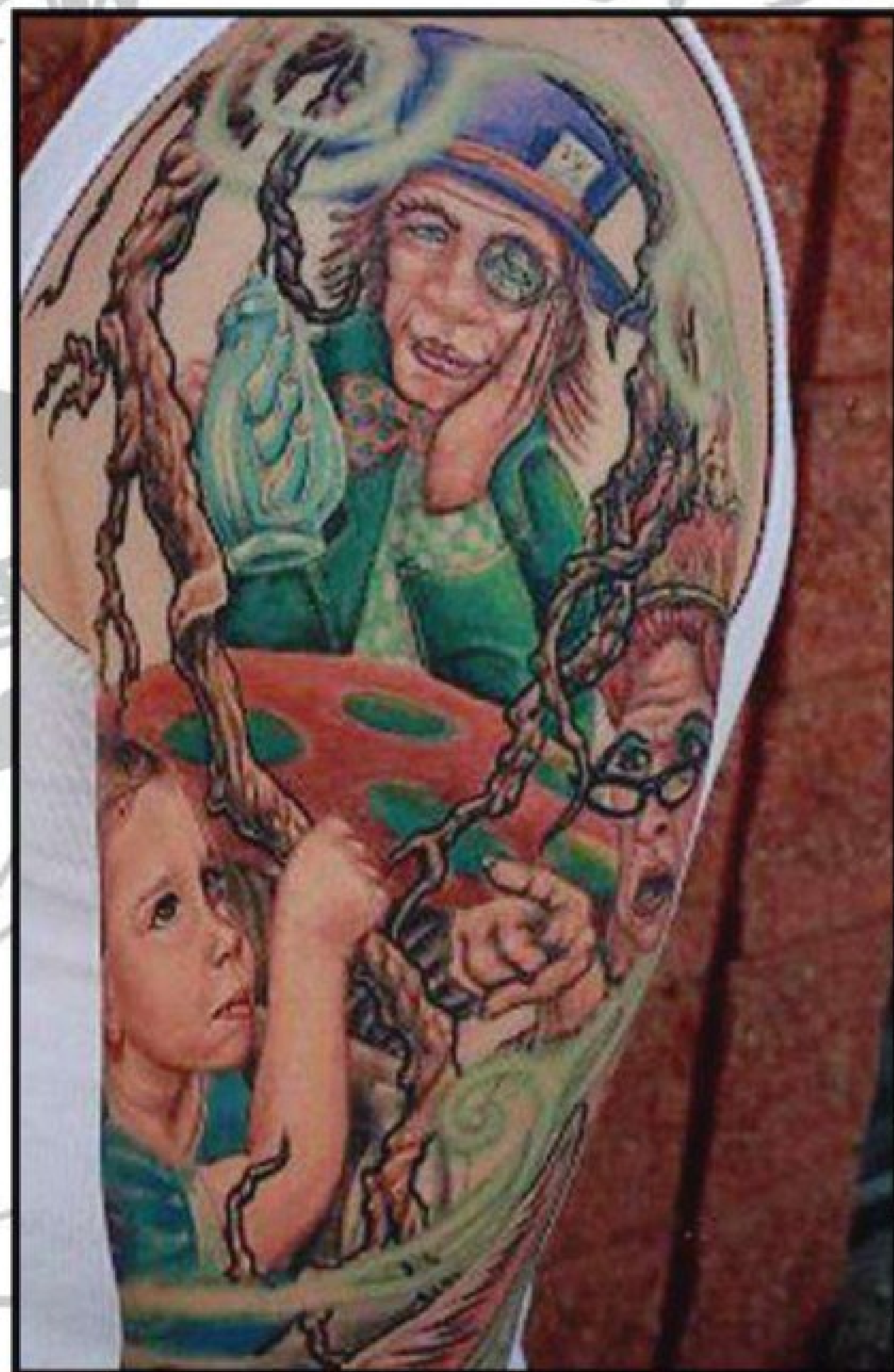
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*Michael L. Pfau, Smiling Buddah Tattoo
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*Chris Walkin, Rickie's Tattoo
Lake Charles, LA*



*Fabien Madeleine, Malefic Tattoos
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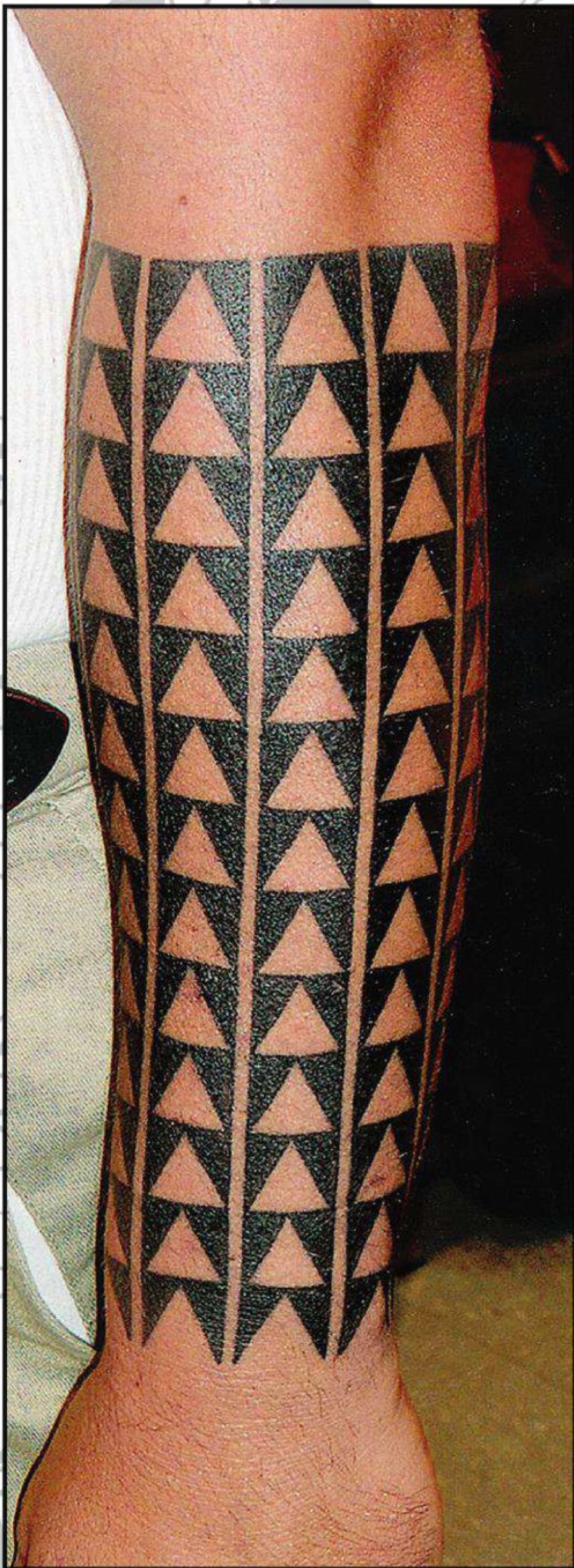
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*George Labrada, Evil or Sacred Tattoos
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*Azarja van der Veen, Shotsie's Tattoo
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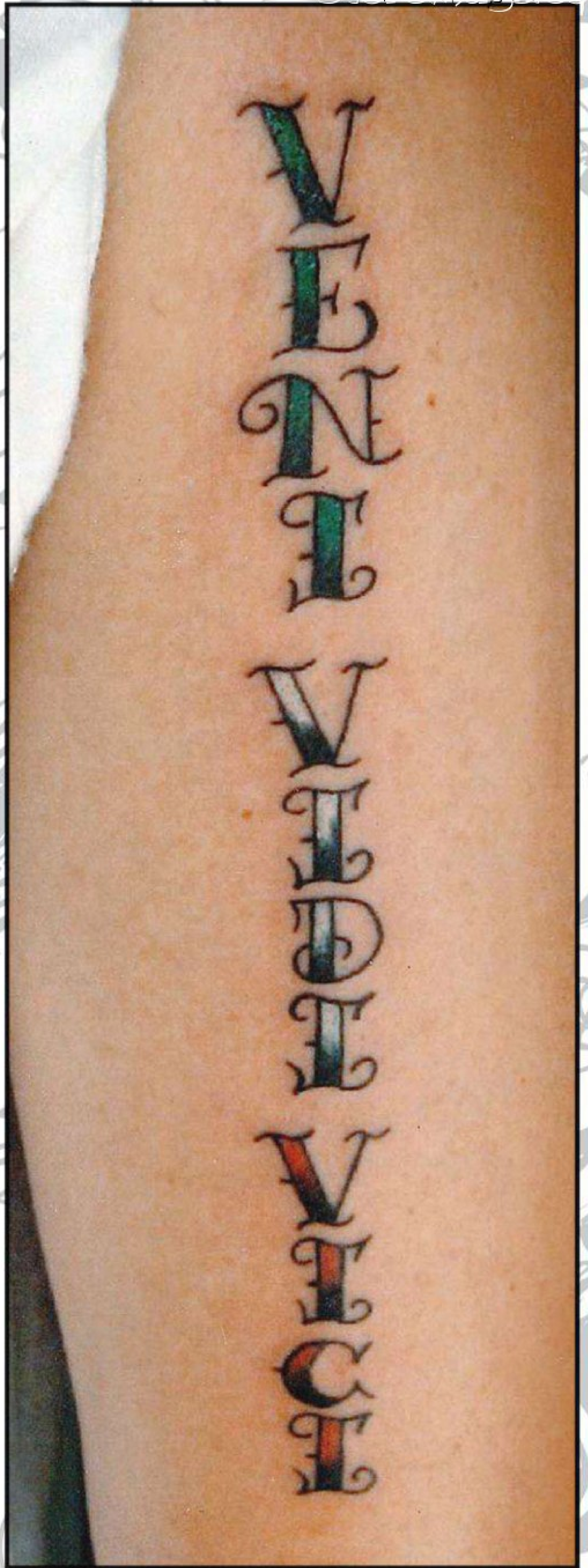
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Joe Leonard, Monkey Wrench Tattoo
Santa Rosa, CA



Azarja van der Veen, Shotsie's Tattoo
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Melbourne, FL



*Matt Burns, Saint Tattoo
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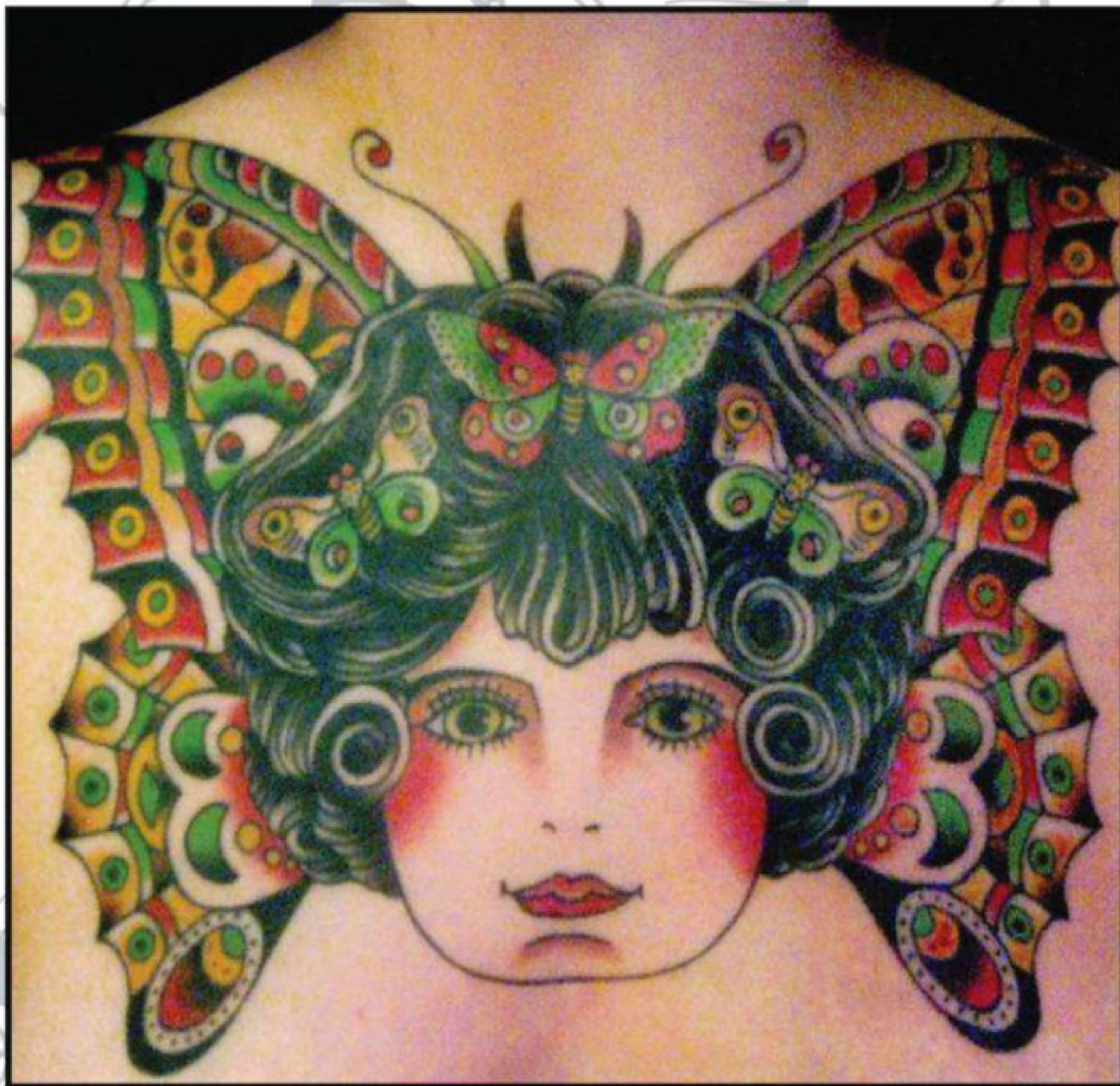
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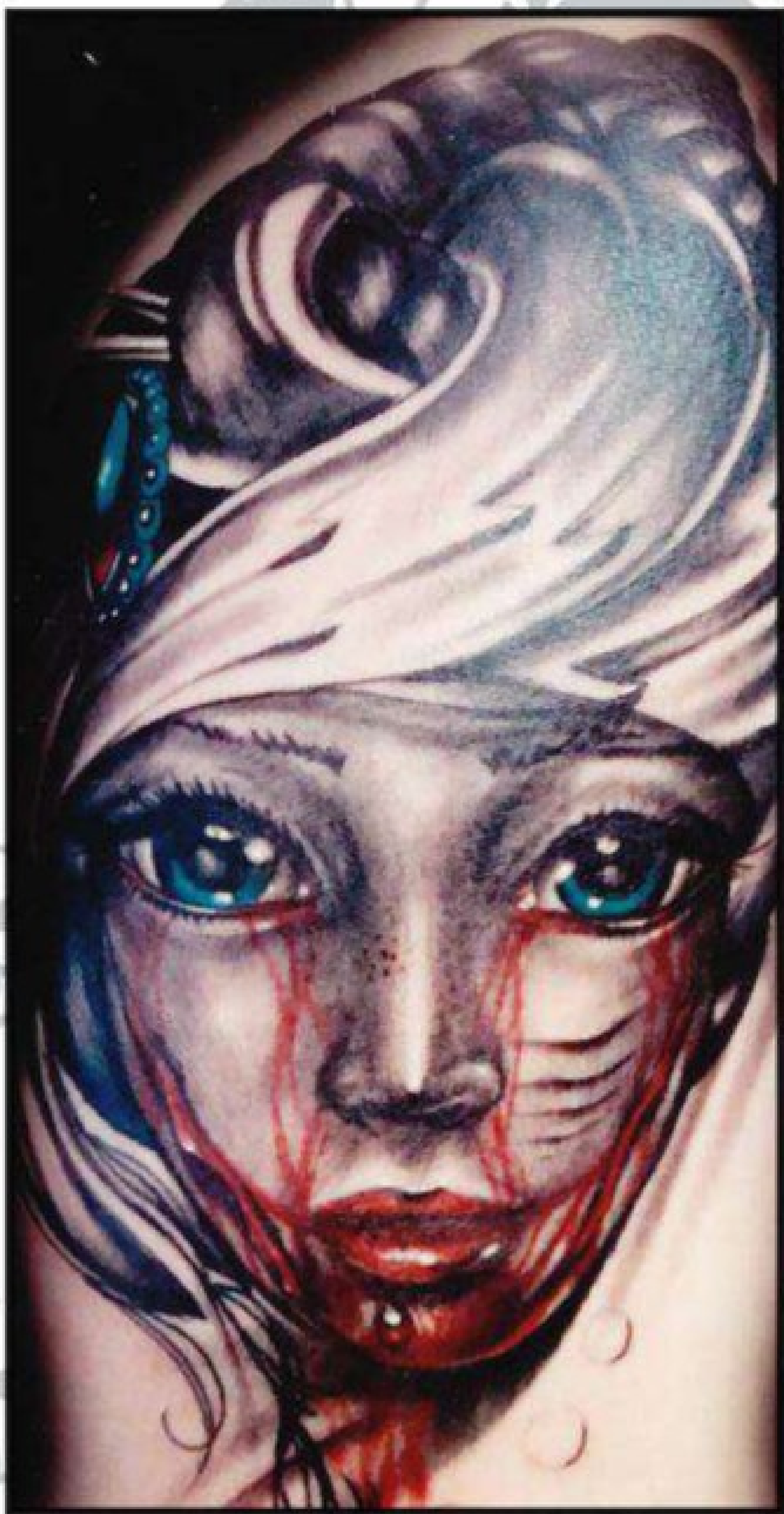
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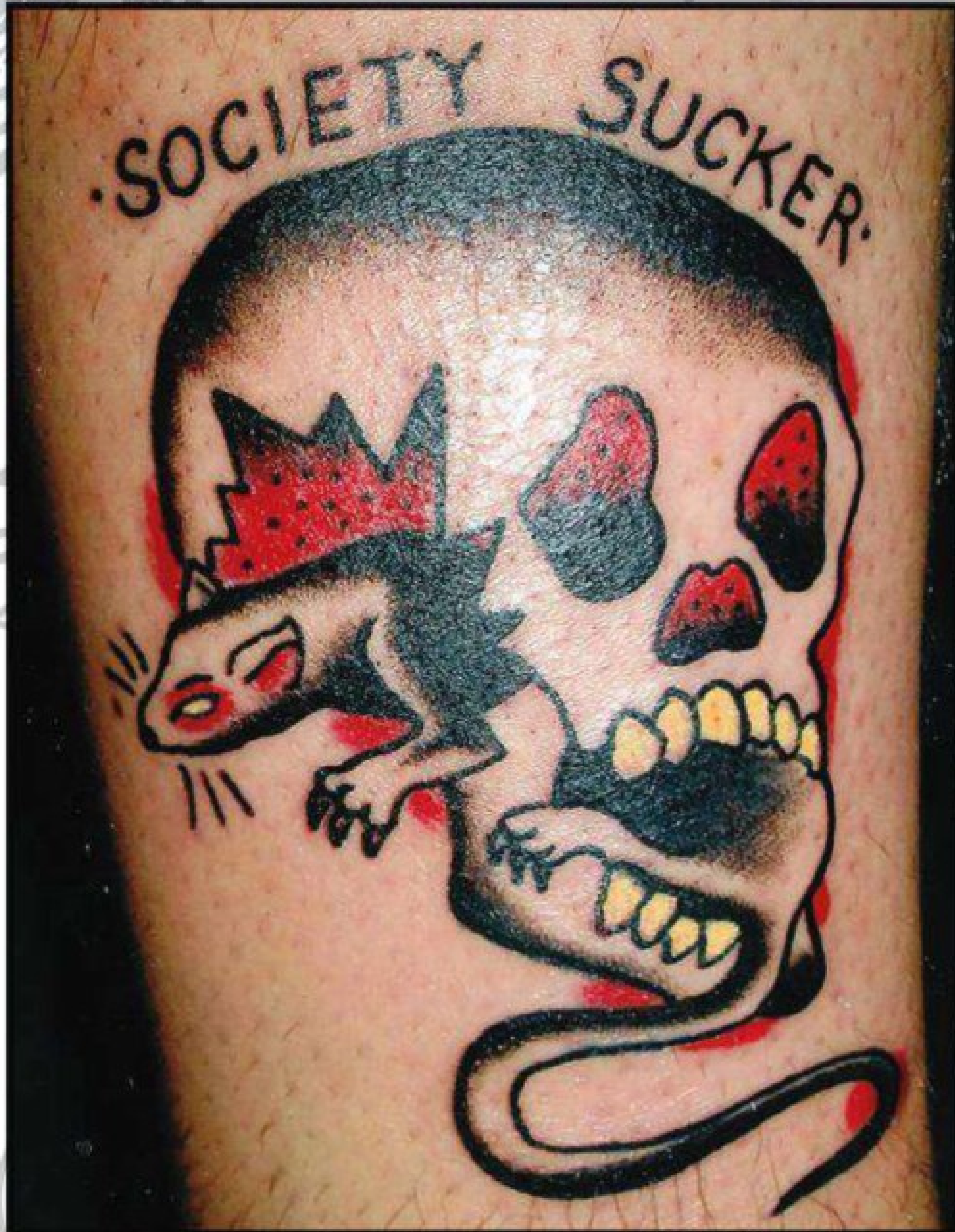
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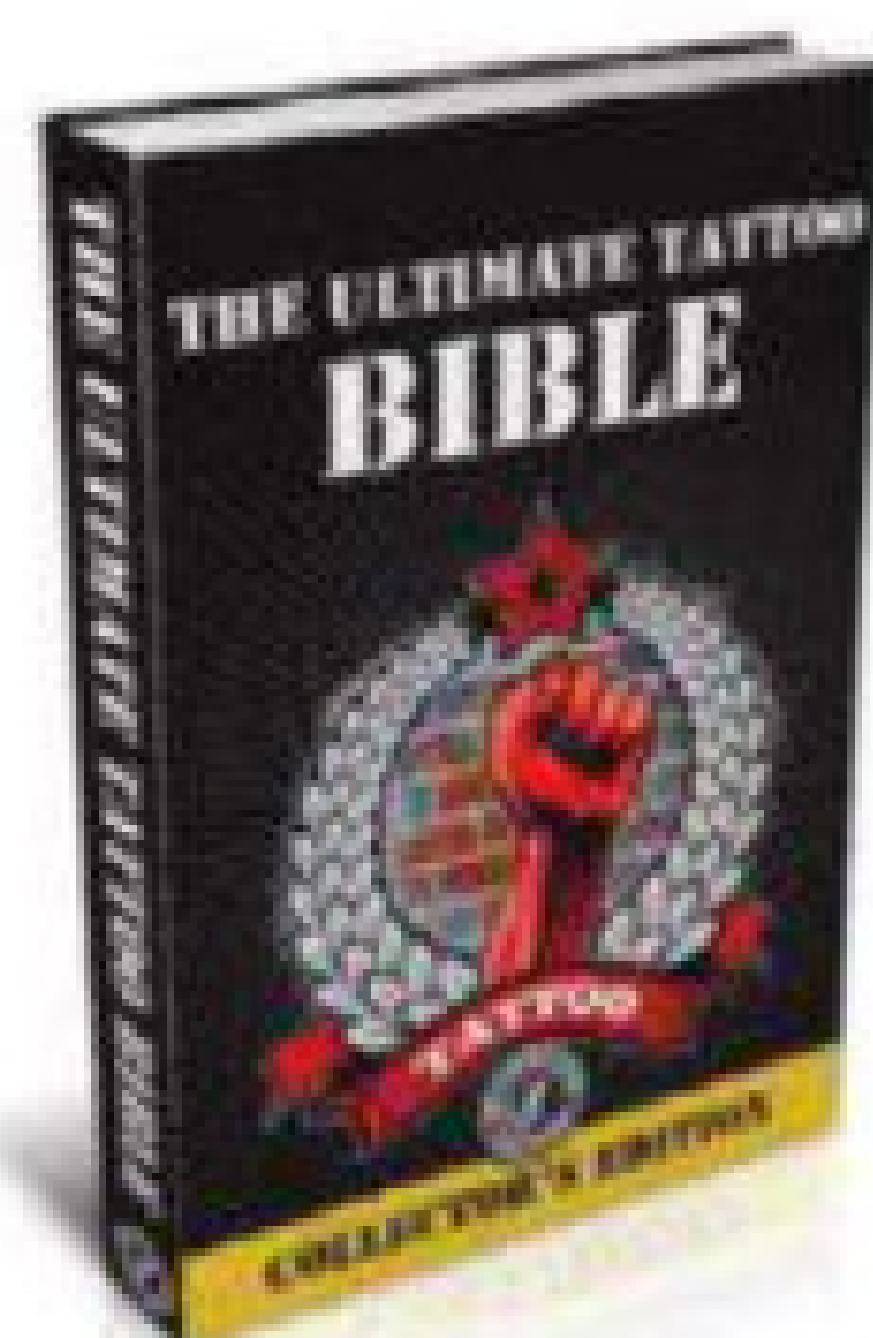
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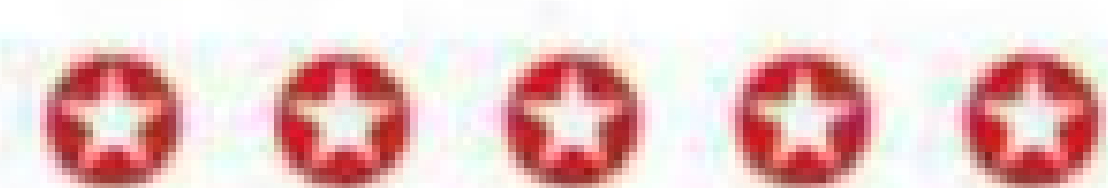


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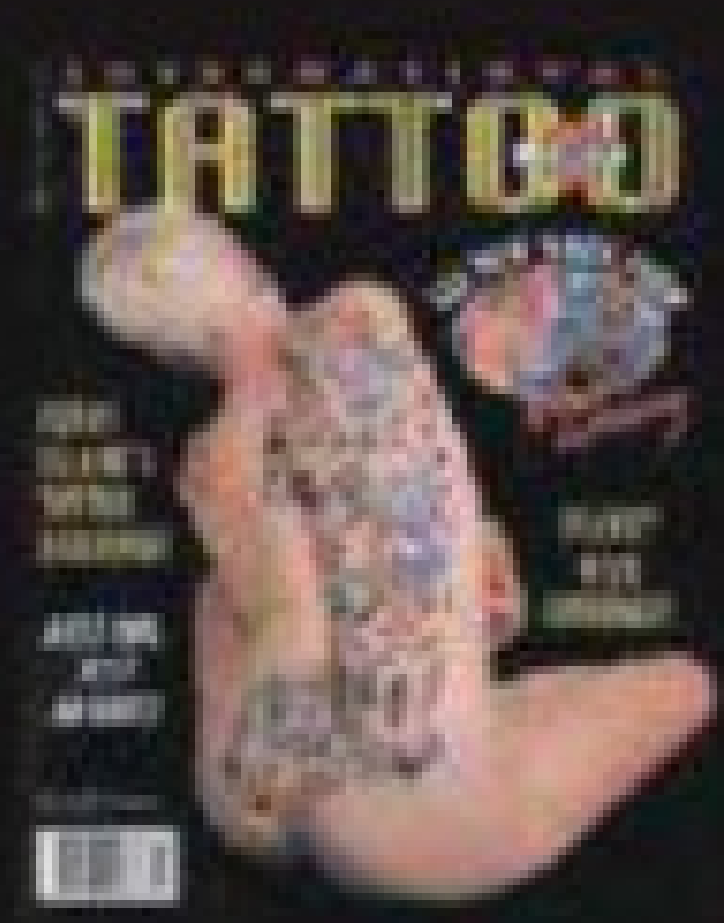
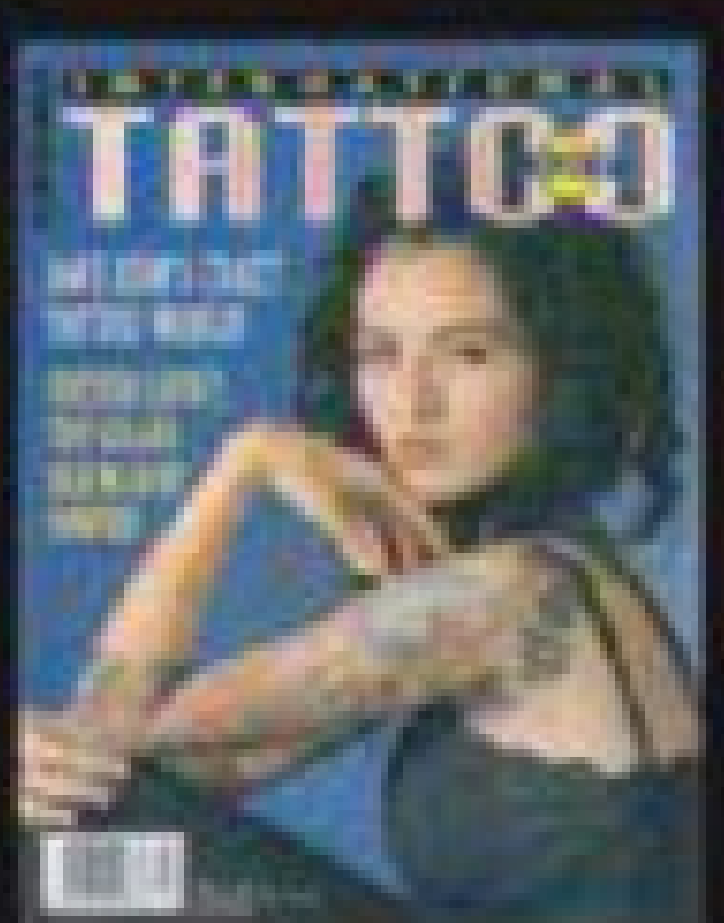
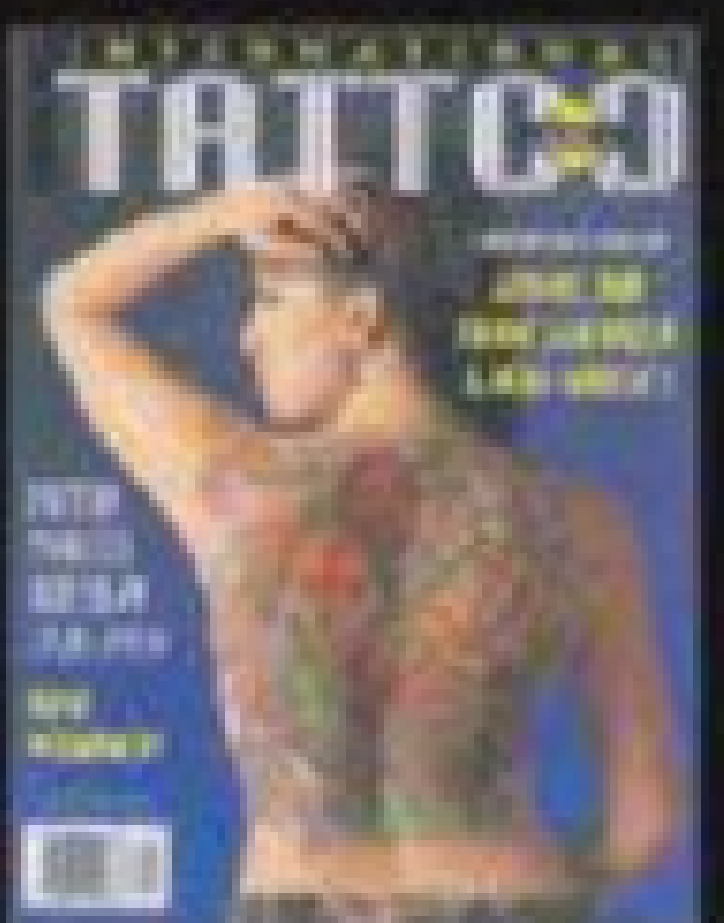
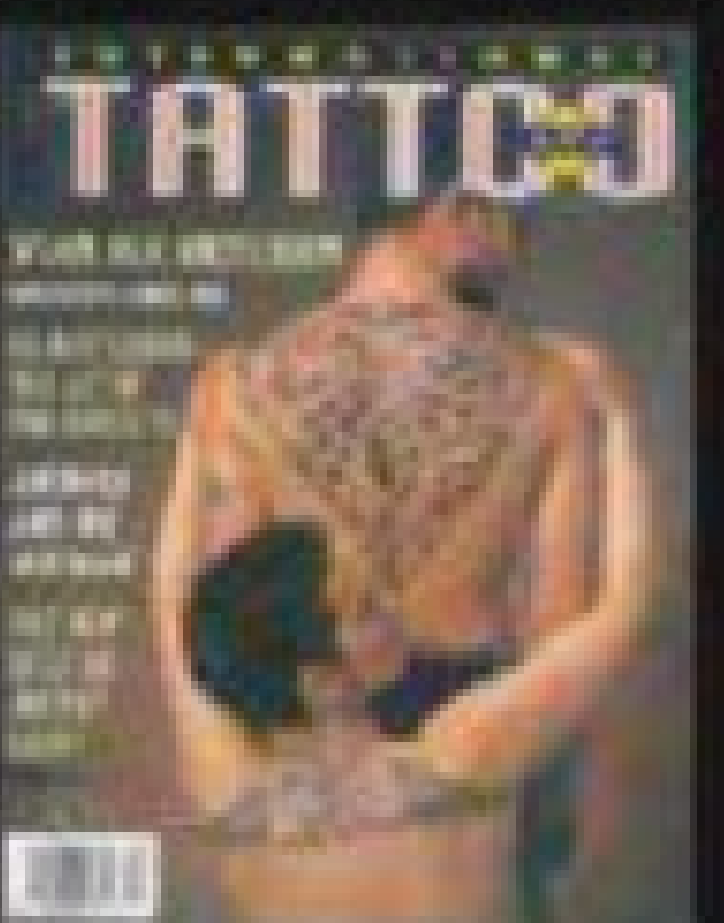


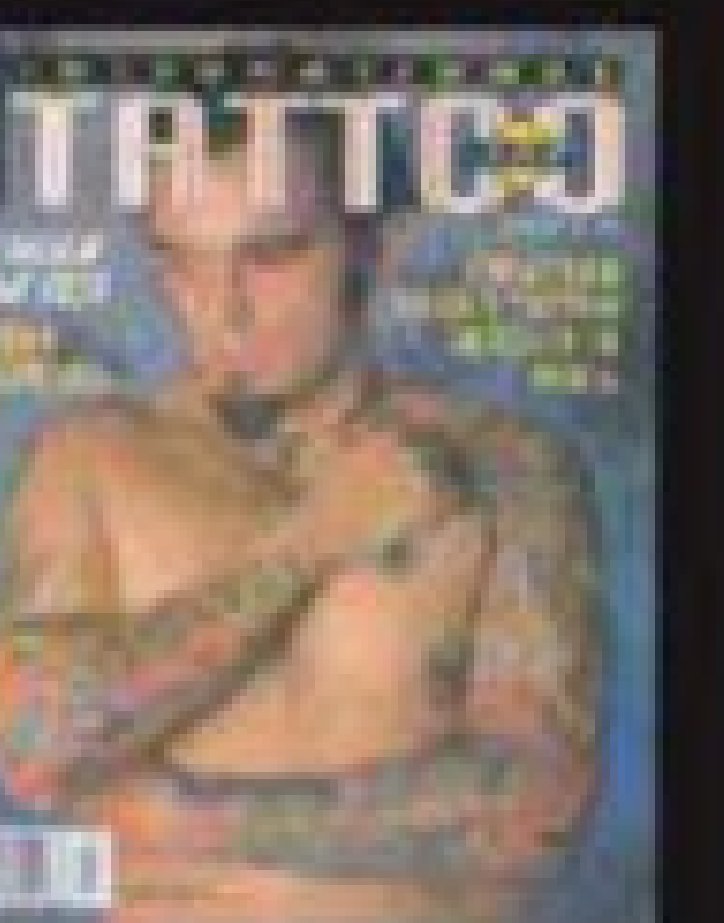
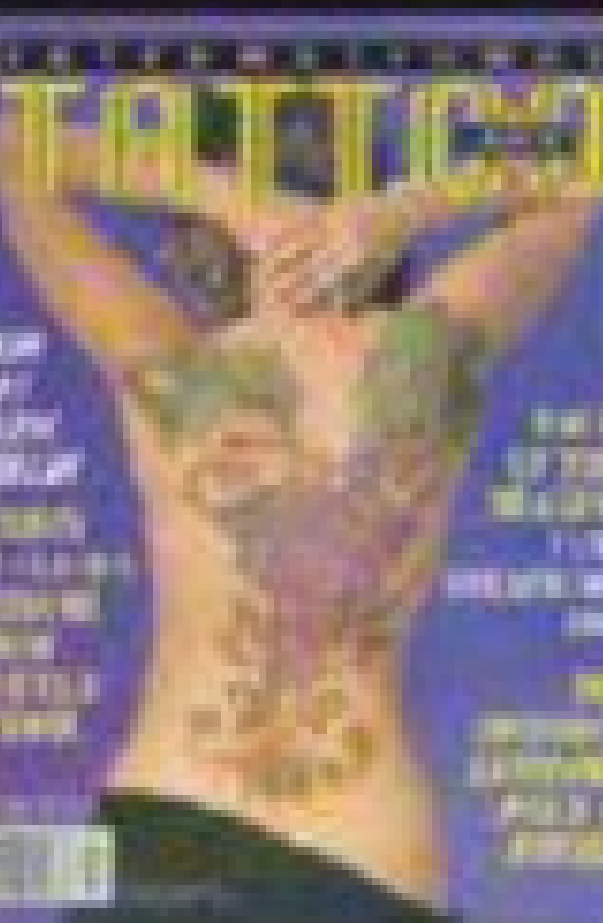
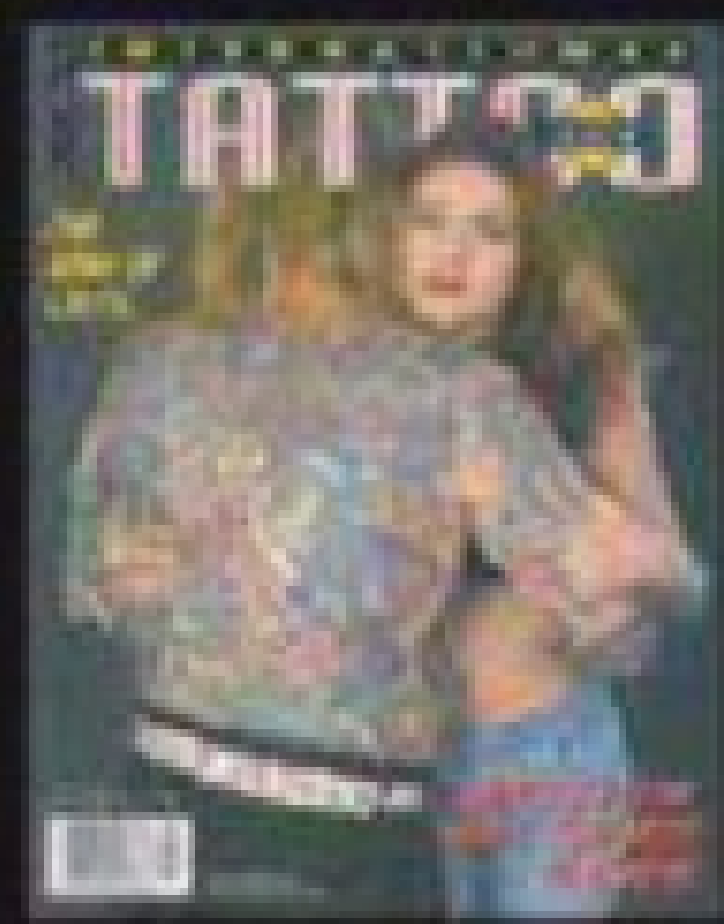
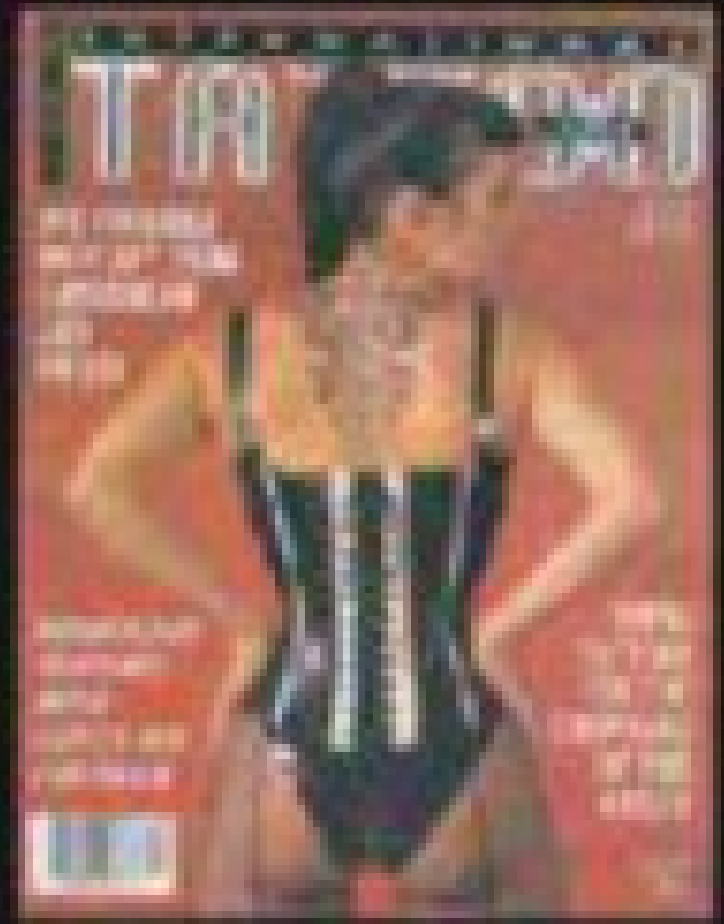










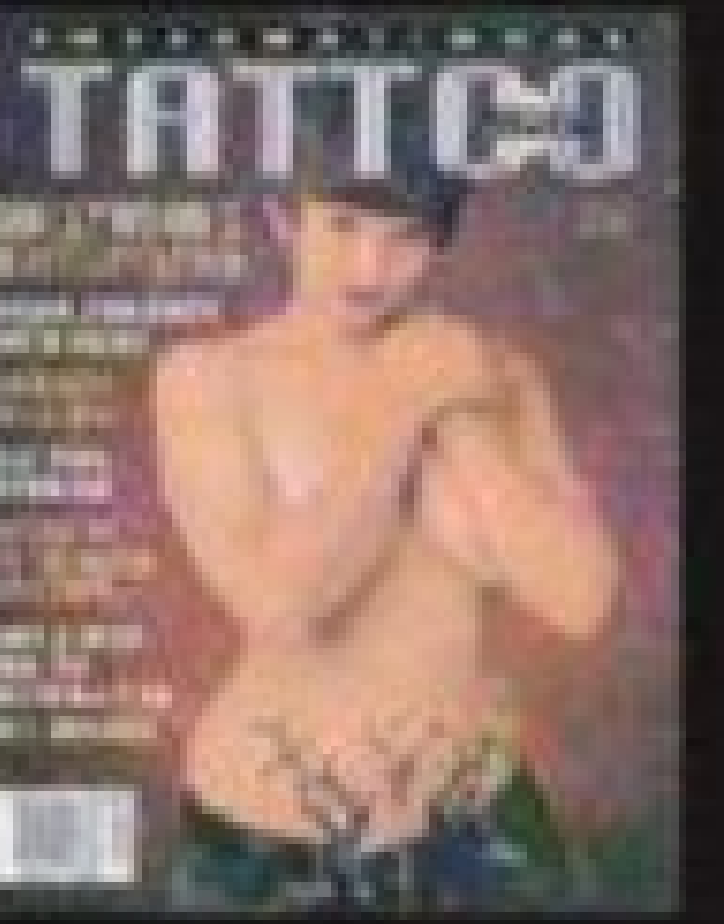



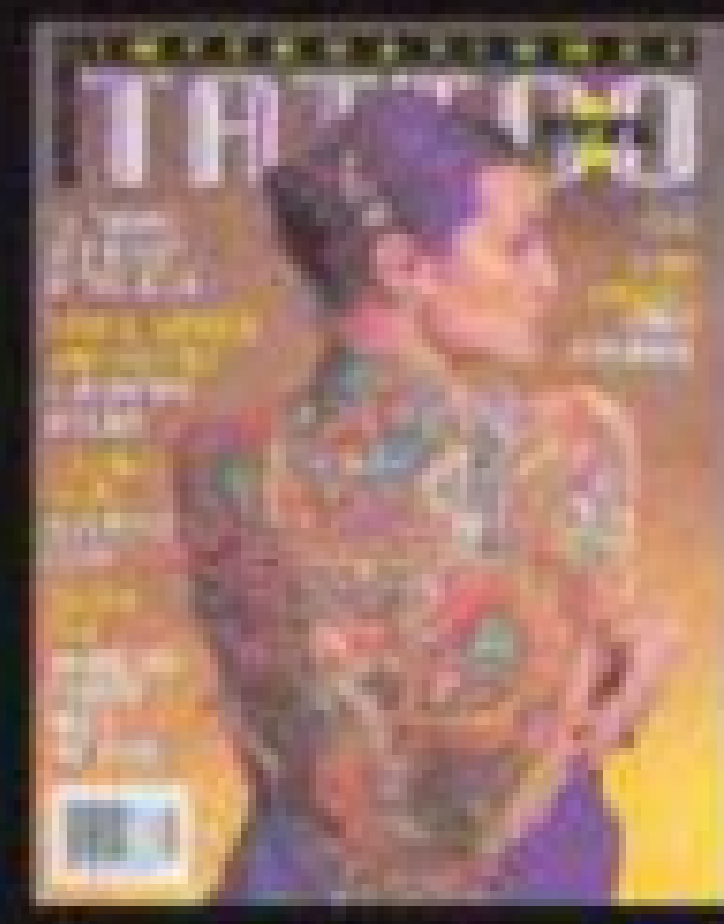








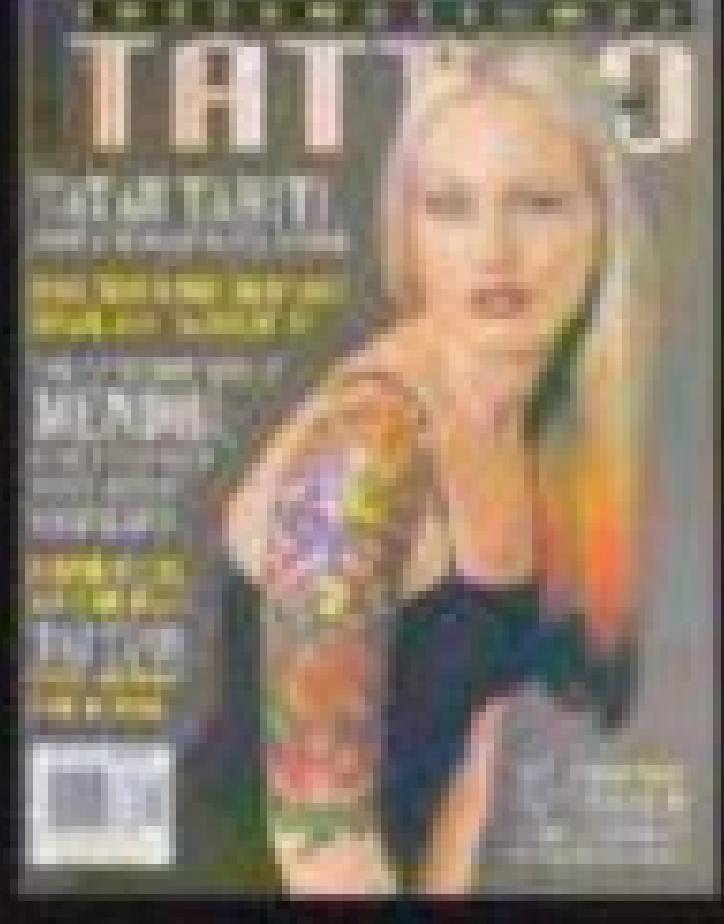
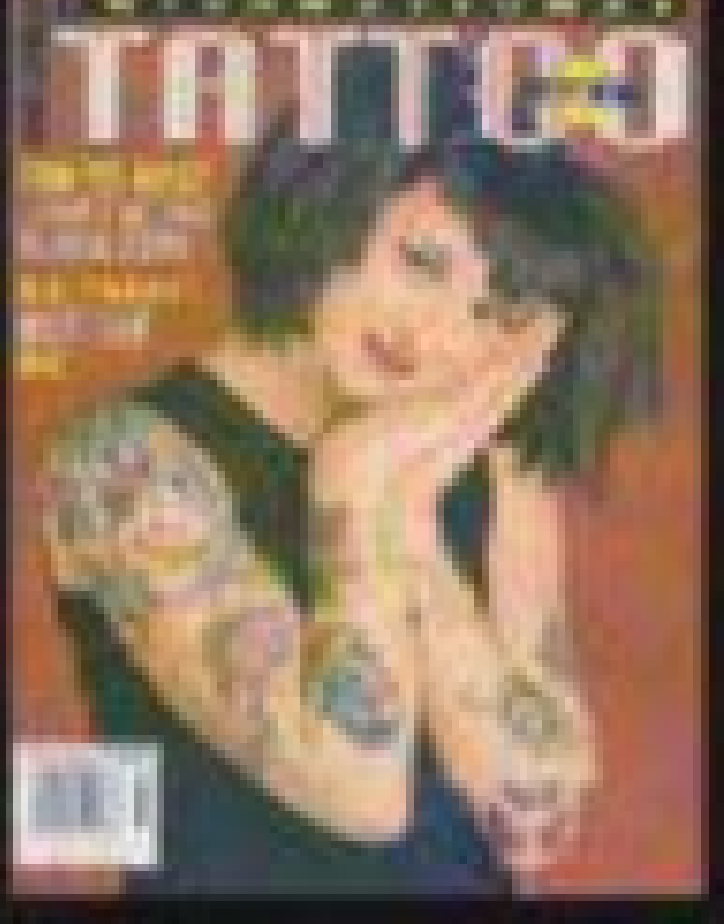


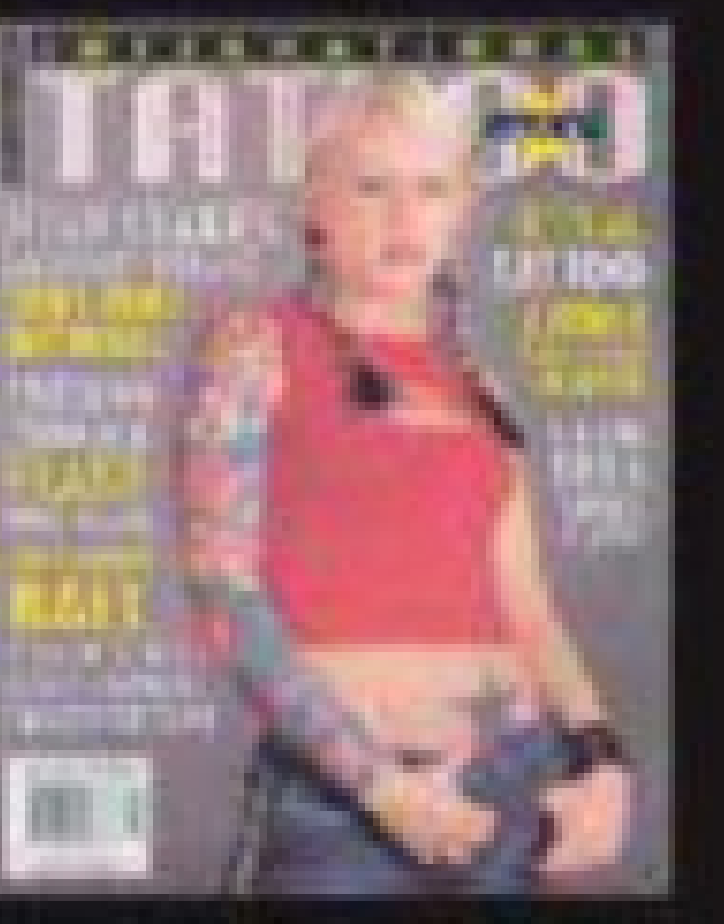
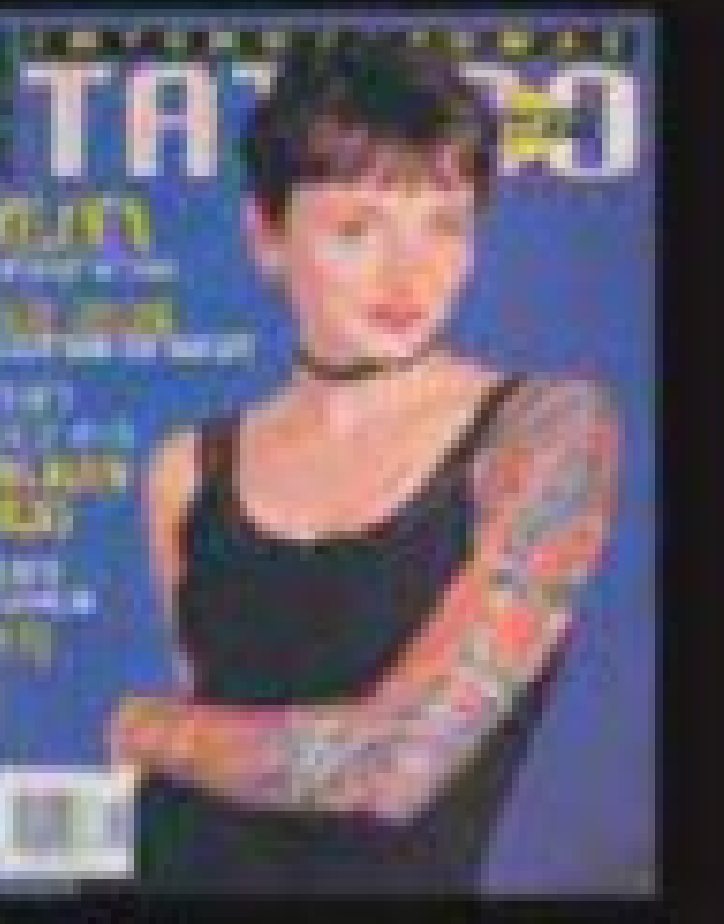




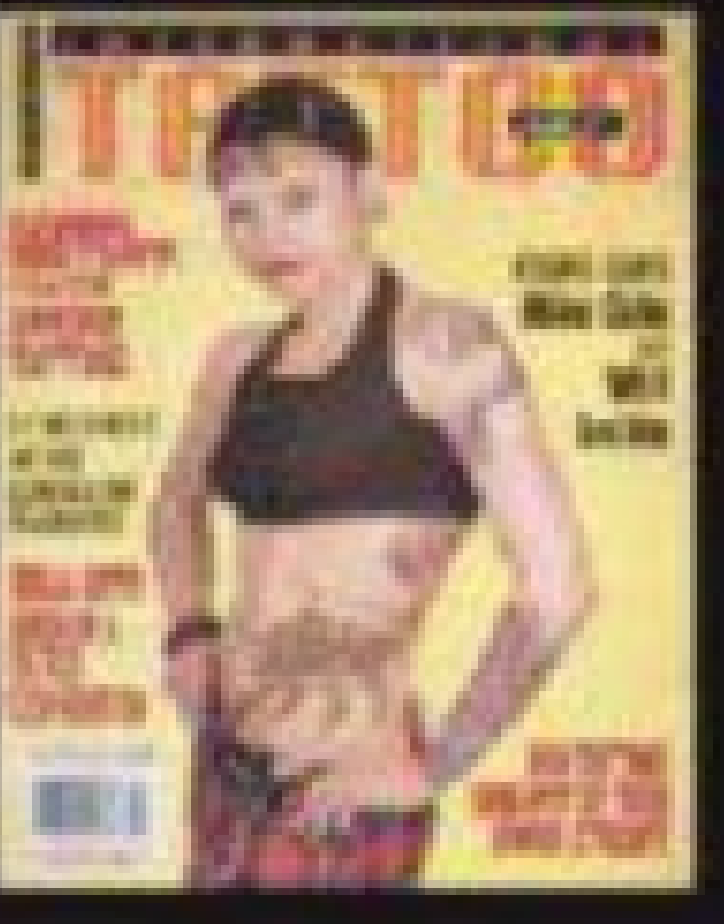












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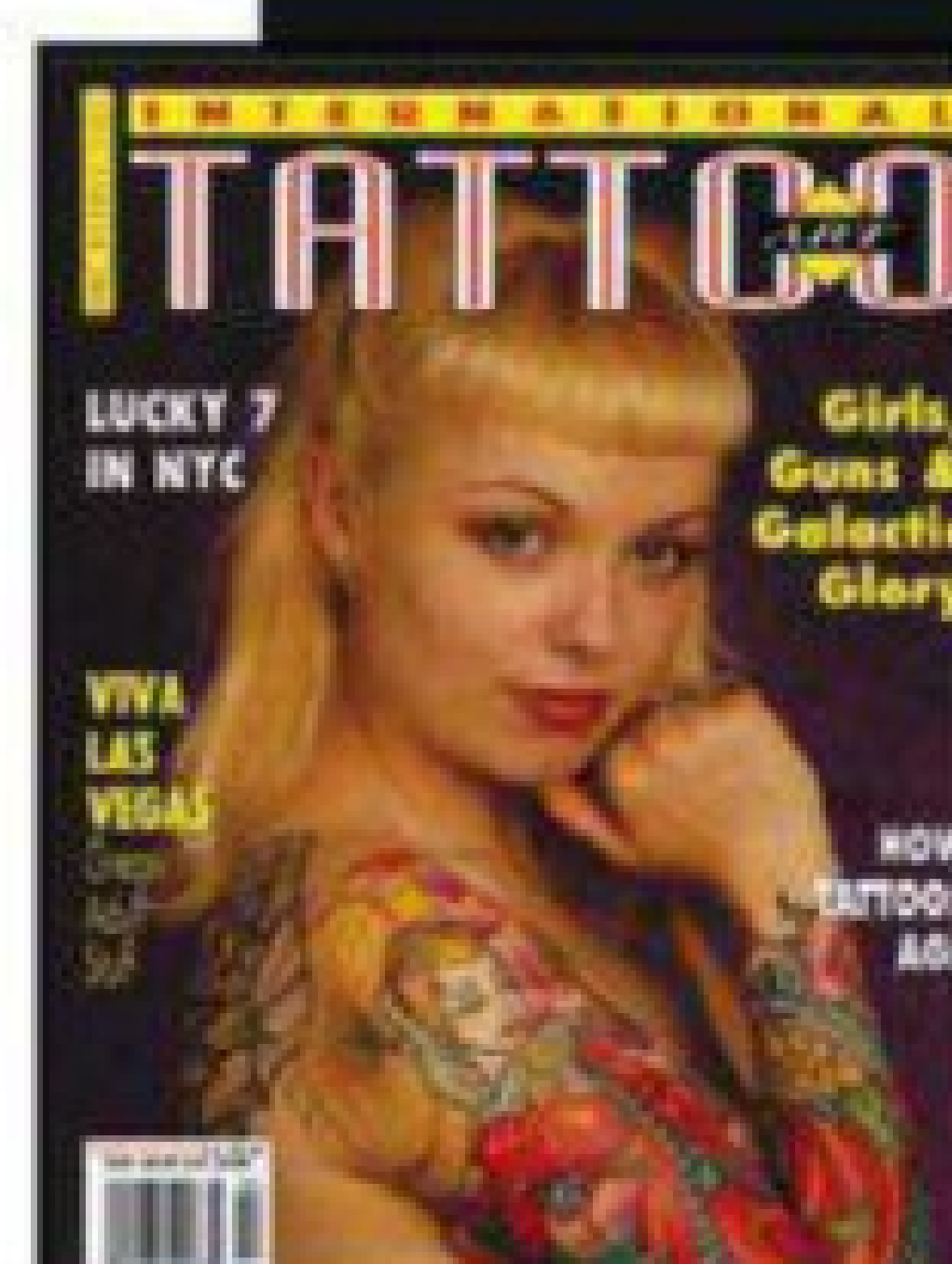
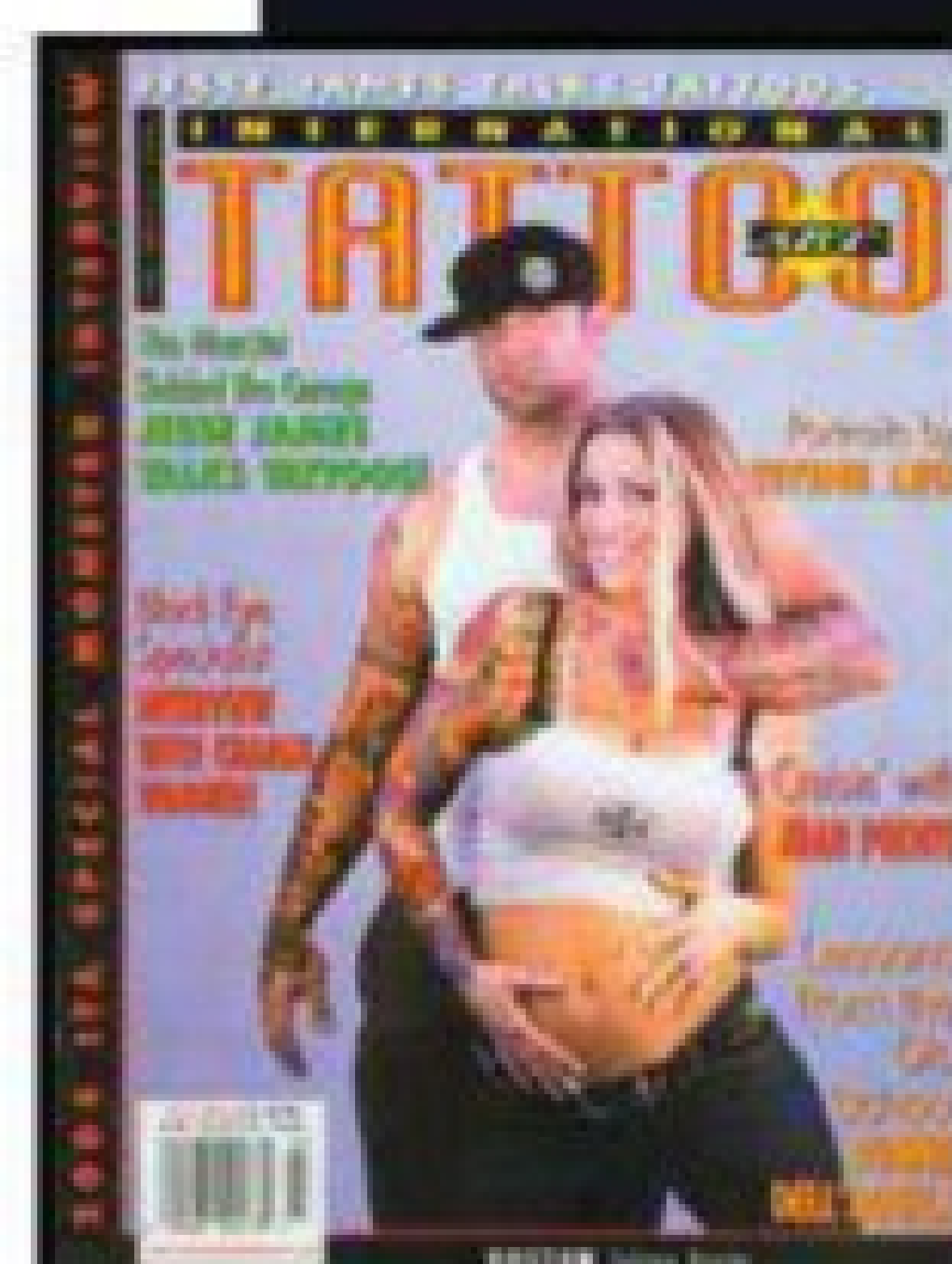
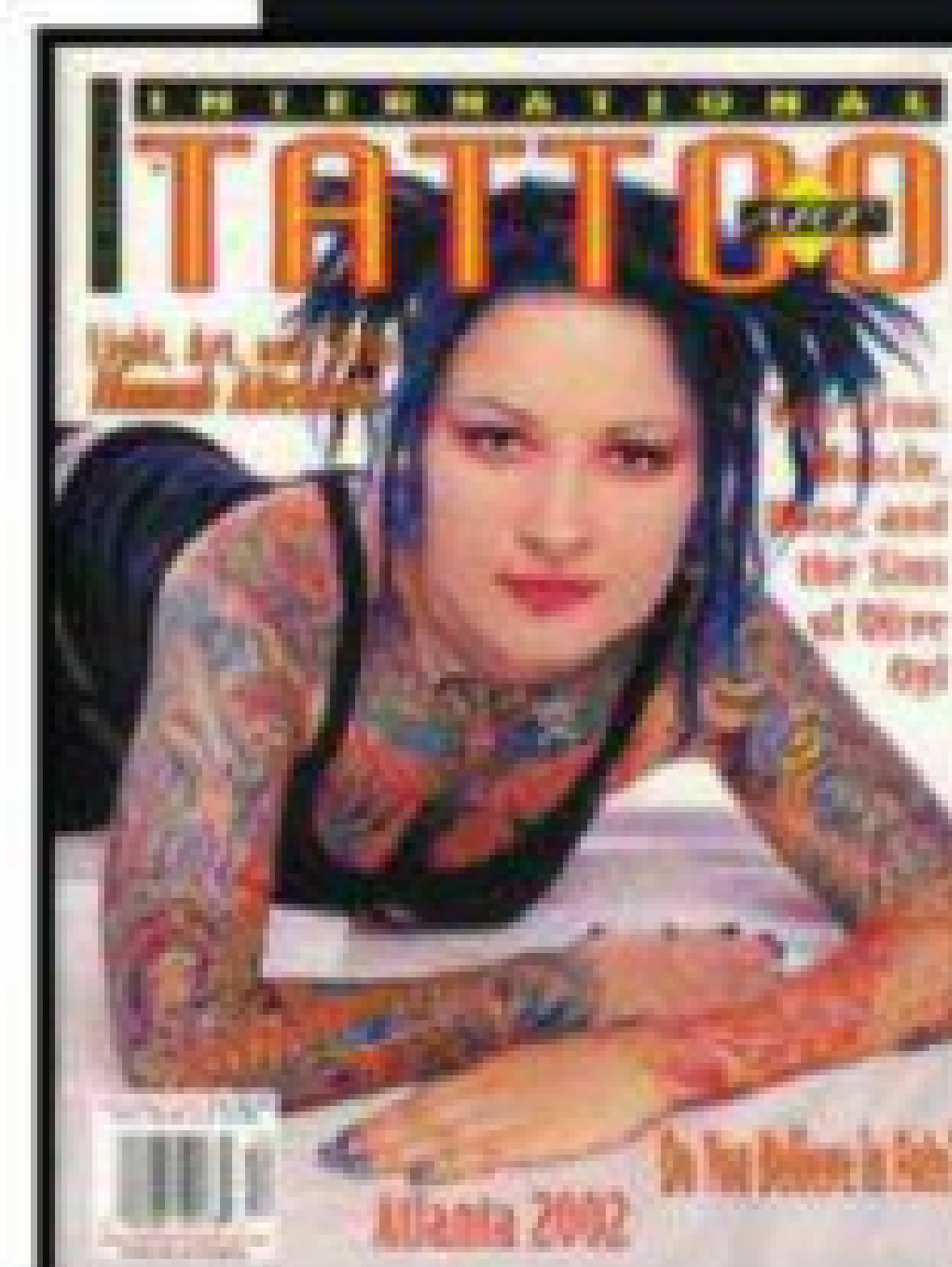
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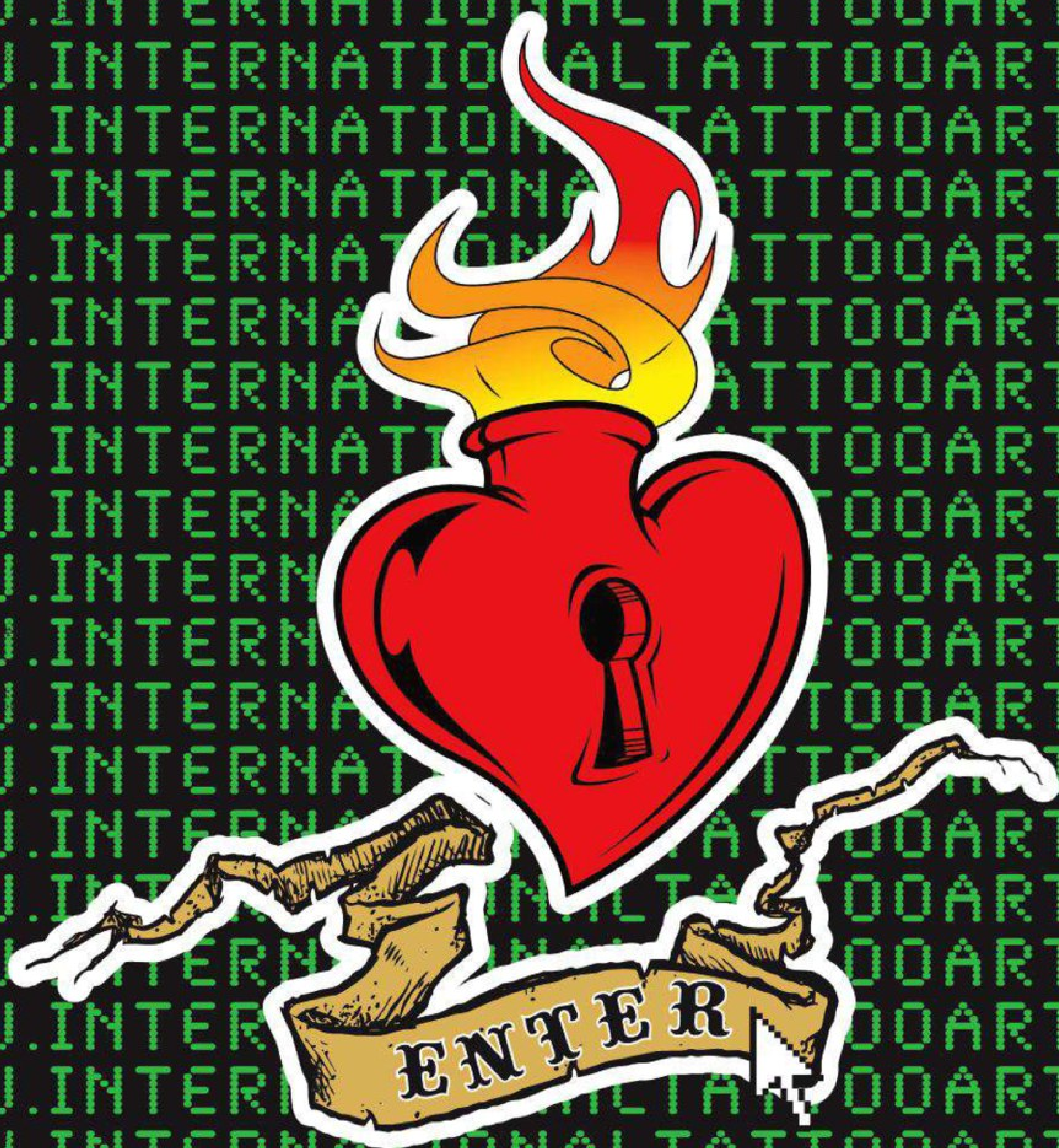
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